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Sherpa Intercultural Experiences in Himalayan Mountaineering: A Pragmatic Phenomenological Perspective

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by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Sherpa Intercultural Experiences in Himalayan Mountaineering:
A Pragmatic Phenomenological Perspective

by

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Sherpas occupy the key position in contemporary Himalayan mountaineering and related tourism industries across the Himalayan chain. Once engaged merely in carrying loads, they now guide clients and organize expeditions. The transformation has left many foreign mountaineers and commentators disoriented. This is largely due to differences in the characteristic ways in which the Sherpas experience the sport, ways different from those of Western mountaineers, Korean mountaineers, and other Nepalis. The dissertation investigates these distinctive ways of experiencing mountaineering. It is based on nine Korean mountaineering expeditions undertaken following the Sherpas and twenty-five months of ethnographic research, which moved between Kathmandu, South Korea, and Sherpa villages in Walung in northeastern Nepal. By comparing with Western and Korean mountaineers' understanding of Himalayan mountaineering, it examines how Sherpas take participation in the tourism industry as their vocation, encounter foreign visitors, and deal with global impacts the country is facing. It also proposes an original

theoretical framework that analyzes experience without committing to "anthromanticism" or the eurocentric assumption of human nature as discrete mind, body, and community.

The dissertation employs a pragmatic phenomenological perspective, which sheds light on ethico-onto-epistemologies or "cosmic dispositions" in relation to the observer's perspective. The Sherpas' cosmic disposition is threefold: individualist collectivism, tantric monism, and open-closed chronology. They regard participation in Himalayan mountaineering as their ethnic vocation and venue for social gathering. Though economic interest is important, the collective appreciation relies on the manner of social relationships. Unlike Western or Korean ideal approach to Himalayan mountaineering, moreover, their understanding considers concrete dimensions of the tourism industry. The Sherpas have increasingly made use of the global nexus with their characteristic ease in the face of unknown and uncertain future. Because the dispositions become distinctive only in relation to others, it also suggests Taoist idealism, Buddhist dualism, and Confucian hierarchy for Korean cosmic disposition as manifested by contemporary Korean mountaineers' experiences. The pragmatic phenomenological perspective provides a non-eurocentric approach to the transnational, cosmopolitan, and globalizing encounters that take place in the Himalayas.

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ORTHOGRAPHIC NOTE

All non-English words are presented in English with the following abbreviations: N for Nepali, S for Sherpa, WS for Walung Sherpa, KS for Khumbu (or Solukhumbu) Sherpa, T for Tibetan, Tm for Tamang, and K for Korean. For the sake of simplicity, I elected to use diacritics to a minimum degree in all systems of transliteration used in this dissertation except cited words and those that are ordinarily romanized with diacritics. Nepali, Sherpa, and other South Asian languages are presented in simplified phonetic forms, while transcription of Korean follows a particular system officially used in South Korea.

Nepali

Nepali words are transliterated in English following one of the systems widely practiced in and outside Nepal, one that requires no use of diacritics and that is used by, for example, R. Manandhar (1999). Its major weakness is the inability of indicating nasalization which is apparent and significant in Nepali. However, I find the system efficient in this dissertation since Nepali words used in this dissertation are limited to a small number. A few notable patterns are presented in the examples below.[1]

Nepal /ne'pʌl/	Nepal
Yahaa /yʌhɑ:/	here

[1] The convention among the specialists is the system suggested by Ralph Lilley Turner (2009[1931]) among several others, as it uses a variety of graphemes (written symbols) to correspond to the phonemes

Puja /ˈpuːjʌ/	the act of worship
Kanchha bhai /ˈkɑnʧɑ bʱɑi/	the youngest brother or son
Mangsir /mɑŋsir/	the eighth month in the Bikram Samvat calendar, coinciding with mid-November to mid-December

Sherpa

Sherpa words are transcribed in English following the system suggested by Nicolas Tournadre, Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa, Gyurme Chodrak and Guillaume Oisel (2009) with the revision of reducing the use of diacritics. Sherpa phonology characteristically displays features including: 1) tonal registration (high and low); 2) retroflex sounds (ʈ, ʈʰ, ɖ); 3) phonemic nasalization (m, n, ɲ, ŋ) and aspiration; 4) distinction between alveolar and alveopalatal affricates (tsʌ and tʃʌ); and 5) oral and nasal pulmonic egressive sounds. To date, there is no general agreement among the linguists regarding romanization and transliteration of Sherpa. This is likely due not only to the scarcity of linguistic research on the language, but also to considerable, gradual, and changing variations among dialects used in the major four regions of Solu, Khumbu, Dolakha and Remechhap, and far-eastern Nepal. No linguistic observation has been made thus far among Sherpas in northern Sankhuwasabha in particular.

Sherpa /ʃerˈpɑ/	Sherpa
Kholé /kʰle/	Please; slowly

(significant spoken sounds) to the greatest possible degree.

Phul /pʰul/	the summer pasture; bridge
Chhyu Arun /ʧju: ɑrun/	Arun River
Nurbuchaaur /nurbuʾʦɑur/	a settlement in Walung
Ngomba /ŋombɑ:/	one of the Sherpa lineages in northern Sankhuwasabha district

Korean

While many Korean and non-Korean scholars in Korean Studies adopt the McCune-Reischauer system (MC; 1937) for romanization of Korean, this dissertation uses the Revised Romanization of Korean (RR). Because MC focuses on the representation of the phonetic pronunciation that changes according to grammatical contexts, it better reflects the proper pronunciation of written Korean words. However, it is difficult to transliterate the romanized Korean into the original Korean again. Officially recognized by the Korean government in 2000, RR uses no diacritics or apostrophe and makes Koreanization easier. For this and other reasons, RR is widely used by Koreans in and outside South Korea. Considering the two perspectives at once, I believe RR better pairs Korean words with their romanized forms. Its major weakness is the difficulty in pronunciation when the reader is not familiar with rules such as those used in the following:

Pungsu /puŋsu/	traditional geoecology; *fengshui* in China
Seo /sʌ/	a surname

Choi /ʧø/	a surname
Hyeong /hyʌŋ/	appellation for older brother
Tap /tˠɑb/	tower
Sotdae /soðæ/	wooden pole
Deungsan /dɯŋsɑːn/	mountaineering or hiking
Sannakgye /sɑna’kje/	mountaineering circle or society at large
Gongdongche /goŋdoŋʧe/	community
Gongdongchejuui /goŋdoŋʧejuu͡ɪ/	theory or attitude for community

ABBREVIATION

CALSAC SNU	College of Agriculture Life Science Alpine Club, Seoul National University
ED	Eleven Diamond
KAF	Korean Alpine Federation
KSAF	Korea Student Alpine Federation
NMA	Nepal Mountaineering Association
SST	Seven Summit Treks
UIAA	Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme, commonly known by its English name International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation

Charles Sanders Peirce Writings

CP	*Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*. Edited by Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss. Reprinted from the 1931-58 edition. Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1998.
EP	*The Essential Peirce*, 2 vols. Edited by Nathan Houser, Christian Kloesel, and the Peirce Edition Project. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1992, 1998.
PSWS	*Peirce on Signs: Writings on Semiotic*, James Hoopes, ed., paper, 294 pp., University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 1991

Chapter 1. Introduction

Sherpa mountaineers occupy the key position in contemporary Himalayan mountaineering and related tourism industries across the Himalayan chain. Once engaged in carrying loads, they now guide clients and organize expeditions. The transformation has left many foreign mountaineers and commentators disoriented. This is largely due to differences in the characteristic ways in which the Sherpas experience the sport, ways different from those of Western mountaineers, Korean mountaineers, and other Nepalis. The dissertation investigates these distinctive ways of experiencing mountaineering. The dissertation research is based on nine Korean mountaineering expeditions undertaken following the Sherpas and twenty-five months of ethnographic research, which moved between Kathmandu, South Korea, and Sherpa villages in Walung in northeastern Nepal. By comparing with Western and Korean mountaineers' understanding of Himalayan mountaineering, it examines how Sherpas take participation in the tourism industry as their vocation, encounter foreign visitors, and deal with global impacts the country is facing. It also proposes an original theoretical framework that analyzes experience without committing to *anthromanticism* or the eurocentric assumption of human nature as discrete mind, body, and community. To avoid this assumption, this dissertation suggests the concept of "cosmic disposition," which takes into account both socio-historical and phenomenological aspects of human experience. To investigate such a cosmic world of experience, I propose a perspective of pragmatic phenomenology that combines insights

drawn from Charles Sanders Peirce's (1839-1914) pragmatism and Martin Heidegger's (1889-1976) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (1908-1961) phenomenologies.

This introduction is divided into three parts. The first section outlines the main theoretical framework on which the dissertation explores Sherpa experiences. The second section identifies the guiding research questions, the research methodology, and the research progression. The last section gives an overview of the chapters in progression through the dissertation.

1.1 Theoretical Orientation: The Cosmic Disposition and the Pragmatic Phenomenological Perspective

Himalayan mountaineering builds upon multifaceted forms of encounter: encounters between local and nonlocal mountaineers, between local histories and global influxes, and between different styles of acting, knowing, and mattering. An anthropological study of Himalayan mountaineering may take one of many angles from which it investigates these manifold encounters. These might include, among others, focusing on socioeconomic patterns that structure encounters, on historical processes through which different groups of people have come to climb the Himalayas, or on the epistemological incongruities, as they have been built into the international tourism industry. The next three chapters deal with all of these aspects, suggesting a recurring theme that I call the *cosmic disposition*. To investigate the cosmic disposition, I suggest a *pragmatic phenomenology*, a synthesis of pragmatism and existential phenomenology. I

will lay out details of this synthesis in following chapters. Here, I will introduce their basic premises.

1.1.1 The Cosmic World: Relativity of Distinctiveness in Global-Local Experience

The word "cosmic" firstly used around the 1640s to mean "of this world," derived from the Greek *kosmikos*. The 1956 edition of the Britannica World Language Dictionary defines cosmic as "pertaining to the universe at large as a harmonious system," "opposed to chaotic" (Preble 1956:305). "The cosmic," as I employ the concept, refers to the most fundamental, yet distinctive, totality of one's life and the world in which one dwells. The cosmic frames a historically patterned style of dealing with elements in the world. As an existential base, the cosmic provides a distinctive ground on which epistemology, ontology, and ethics forge their constitutions. In relation to this distinctive epistemic, ontic, and ethical grounding, a *cosmic world* is shaped. This cosmic world is constituted in part by multi-layered social and historical processes, such that members of a social group can display a more or less similar cosmic characters in comparison to other group members.

With this postulation, I argue that the working processes of epistemology, ontology, and ethics, for those who are momentarily immersed in them, are so natural and lacking in any distinctive character that they become "anonymous" as Merleau-Ponty (2002) puts it. I would define this invisible manner of the workings of epistemology, ontology, and ethics as *preobjectivity*. In dealing with everyday matters and in drawing existential significance from these dealings, human beings inevitably engage in the

cosmic world preobjectively—humans typically experience the world cosmically on preobjective levels.

My usage of "the cosmic" and "the cosmic world" relates to recent scholarship in anthropology that has taken up such ideas as "cosmology," the "macrocosm" and the "microcosm." Culturally distinctive sets of logics and principles have sometimes been called "cosmologies." Not merely regarding the term as a theory of the universe, "Every cosmology," Dean Barnlund says, "creates its own events, placing some features in focus while placing others out" (Barnlund 1981:89). Thus, the study of cosmology means, as Signe Howell notes, "taking account of the relationship between the whole and the parts: the macrocosm and the microcosm" (Howell 2002:132). That is to say, the study of cosmology seeks patterns and generalities by observing particularities.

The concept of the cosmic demands theoretical underpinnings to account for distinctiveness. A cosmic totality is distinctive only in *relation* to other cosmic totalities. The relationality of its distinctiveness characterizes a given cosmic world. Recent theorizations of globalization can provide a point of entry for discussing for this relational principle of cosmic character.

In recent decades, an increasing number of scholars in South Asian studies have engaged in studying the phenomena of social change and changing visions of human life across the Himalayan chain. Sherpas of Walung, the group of people this dissertation focuses on, also maintain everyday lives that are faced with many global influxes and external influences. One of the major theoretical issues of globalization is how locals react to global forces. Referring to the process of translating external notions into a local

cultural canon, *vernacularization* (Merry 2006) has become increasingly important in the twenty-first century. I consider the vernacularizing of global forces and external elements heuristically in two phases: initially, communities or individuals characteristically deal with the encroaching wave of global forces by reforming customs, revitalizing traditions, or adopting universal cultural elements, depending on particular local-nonlocal connections. In the course of these multifaceted transformations, actors subsequently conform themselves to principles that are culturally distinctive and yet relatively invisible. The former facet of vernacularization, or the visible ways in which cultural transformations take place in various schemes of life, has been widely accepted as a normalized focus for approaching the study of globalization in the social sciences, while the latter has received less attention. This has been true in American cultural anthropology. As Jonathan Friedman (2013) points out, anthropologists who advocate globalization and its fruits tend to treat reality as made up only of acts and consider most cultural categories to be externally and politically imposed. Therefore, they resolutely attack essentialism and cultural boundedness in favor of hybridity, cosmopolitanism, trans-locality, trans-nationalism, and trans-culturalism. Calling them "globalists," Friedman criticizes these writers for assuming a sort of cultural evolution from local to global and reducing culture to "substance" (ibid., 359). Such a globalist view in South Asian studies is expressed by, for example, Gérard Toffin and Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka when they note that the foothills of the Himalayas are rapidly changing and increasingly connected to the rest of the world and are no longer remote or "traditional" (Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka 2014).

Favoring what he terms a "global-systems" approach instead, Friedman defines "the global" as "the invisible logics or properties of interlocal relations" (Friedman 2013:364). He suggests that all global phenomena are observable only in local terms and that their relations are not things attached to the local but which are part of the local. In this view, the local is defined only in relation with the nonlocal since the relation is part of the local. Therefore, distinctiveness may be conceptualized without drawing a local boundary around any social group or entity. Rather, by virtue of the lack of boundary, any local will exhibit distinctive characteristics to other localities.[2]

1.1.2 The Cosmic Disposition: A Relational Approach

The notion of distinctiveness embedded in the concept of cosmic draws an insight from Clifford Geertz's works, particularly from his concept of "disposition." To outline the theoretical trajectory of distinctiveness, I critically review his works and Sherry Ortner's applications of them (1989; 2006).

Geertzs (e.g. 1995), as well as several anthropologists (notably Pierre Bourdieu and Marshall Sahlins), firmly argued that the enduring distinctive characters of any population would be expressed in various spheres of human lives. However, it seems to me that the notion of distinctiveness has not been well conceptualized and thus sometimes dismissed ultimately by a few later anthropologists (e.g. Gananath Obeyesekere's [1992:20] "practical rationality" as universal). Geertz observed that for

[2] In the same vein, Marshall Sahlins criticizes "the easy functionalist dismissal of the peoples' claims of cultural distinction (the so-called invention of tradition)" (1999:404). He argues "the fallacy of cultural separation: because cultures are distinctive they are closed" (ibid., 404).

the Balinese a "characteristic form seems to have reconstructed itself continually … reemerging under different names and in different places as but further transcriptions of a fixed ideal" (Geertz 1980:134). These Balinese characteristic forms include such things as anonymous person-perceptions, a discrete or punctual sense of time, and the ceremonialization of social interaction (Geertz 1973a). He calls that culturally characteristic and continuing form "disposition," noting,

> [A] certain distinctive set of dispositions (tendencies, capacities, propensities, skills, habits, liabilities, pronenesses) … lend a chronic character to the flow of [an individual's] activity and the quality of his experience. A disposition describes not an activity or an occurrence but a probability of an activity being performed or an occurrence occurring in certain circumstances (Geertz 1973b:95).

Though Geertz's insight of the disposition provides an important theoretical basis to my own framework (§4.1), his conception is by no means *relational*—reflexive, reciprocal, and resonating with a population in question in regard to the capacity of observer-researcher's perspective. In his characterization of culture, Geertz adopts the sociologist Pitirim Sorokin's concept of "logico-meaningful integration," that is, "a unity of style, of logical implication, of meaning and value" (1973c:145). By doing so, he considers culture to exist as an object identifiable in regard to each social group, yet without regard to the anthropologist's perspective.

This "culturalism" has been partly adopted by a number of anthropologists, including Sherry Ortner (1989). In a similar manner, she suggests the concept "cultural schema," referring to "a culturally standardized frame of some sort" or "a common plot," functioning as a meaningful account of the world (Ortner 1989:60, 67, 74). After going

through the reflective turn in the 1980s and 90s, she adopts critical views (such as Karl Marx, Pierre Bourdieu, Anthony Giddens, and Gayatry Spivak) and argues for "a robust anthropology of subjectivity" (Ortner 2006:127). Her notion of subjectivity, as a product of history and society, carries a cultural mode of agency: "Agency is not some natural or originary will; it takes shape as specific desires and intentions within a matrix of subjectivity—of (culturally constituted) feelings, thoughts, and meanings" (ibid., 110). Thus, Geertz's nonrelational distinctiveness that demarcates culture by social boundary is explicated with historical and social processes, so much so that subjectivity is disassembled into myriad mental images—still without regard to the anthropologist's point of view. No matter who the observer is, or even without considering the observer's presence, "cultures" are imagined out there in parallel with social groups. As Friedman criticizes above, culture is reduced into substance because it is now essentially objectifiable in the Ortner's scheme, so that a study of culture denotes a study of social relations between social atoms that are universally found.

In this view, what is invisible from the observer's perspective evades the range of inquiry. Observation of someone's experience is a relational act in which the observer interpret the observed using one's own regime of epistemology, ontology, and ethics. The Javanese's "distinctive set of dispositions" was distinctive to Geertz's view and less likely to the Javanese's view; the distinctiveness here may have emerged from a set of epistemology, ontology, and ethics in which Geertz is immersed. By the same token, Geertz's and Ortner's viewpoints are, as they omit to reflect, hardly distinctive to themselves. Both observer and the observed are preobjectively engrossed in each of their

own cosmic world, as Claude Lévi-Strauss said, "*The observer himself is a part of his observation*" (Lévi-Strauss 1987[1950]:29). Geertz, as well as Ortner, was unclear about this reflexivity and therefore overlooked the inevitable participation of the observer in the observed.

The cosmic disposition differs from the Geertzian disposition because of the relationality built into the concept. The nonrelational fallacy embedded in the Geertzian culturalism would render the focus of anthropological analysis inclined toward visible, explicit, and describable features of any given phenomena, privileging conspicuous institutions (such as religion, ethnicity, and state government) and emphasizing their roles shaping human perceptions.[3] In contrast, a discussion of the cosmic disposition begins by taking into account the process in which religious focuses, political institutions, economic relations and the like become patterned, so they arise conspicuously.

This point also renders the cosmic disposition divorced from Pierre Bourdieu's concept of *habitus*. Similar to the cosmic disposition, Bourdieu defines habitus as "an acquired system of generative schemes *objectively* adjusted to the particular conditions in which it is constituted," a system "engenders all the thoughts, all the perceptions, and all the actions consistent with those conditions, and no others" (Bourdieu 1977:95; italics mine). I disagree with his homogeneous use of objectivity. Though he maintains that

[3] Geertz was influenced by Weber's (2003[1930]) thoughts. Religion and other institutions, therefore, play an important role in his framework. He posits, "As religion on one side anchors the power of our symbolic resources for formulating analytic ideas in an authoritative conception of the overall shape of reality, so on another side it anchors the power of our, also symbolic, resources for expressing emotion—moods, sentiments, passions, affections, feelings—in a similar conception of its pervasive tenor, its inherent tone and temper" (Geertz 1973b:104). Religion, in this scheme, becomes a matrix of symbolism and practices from which one may identify the grounding culture.

objectivity is an effect of the "orchestration of habitus" and is "secured by consensus on the meaning (*sens*) of practices and the world" (ibid., 80), it is, in his scheme, destined to be actualized through certain societal relationships between agents. What he calls "objective structure" of human relations as constituted by habitus is supposed to exhibit social relationships typical to Western societies, such as "a boss giving orders to a subordinate, colleagues discussing their pupils, academics taking part in a symposium," relationships primarily embody, but not limited to, "the material conditions of existence characteristic of a class condition" (ibid., 72, 81). Because it does not consider the making of society, it cannot be fully historical. One might rightfully criticize his concept of habitus as a form of societal reductionism. One of the questionable conditions following this premise of homogeneous objectivity is to equate critical perspectives held by dominated classes with a real alternative step toward a disclosure of the hither side of habitus (e.g. ibid., 169).

In contrast, ways of objectivizing may not be the same in different populations, so that objectivity refers to one pole of dualism, constitution and operation of which may be diverse. To explore this diversity of objectivization, I begin the next chapter by asking who Sherpas are and what other observers have presupposed when they attempted to understand Sherpas.

1.1.3 Pragmatic Phenomenology: A Fallibilistic Standpoint

As I have discussed, Geertz's nonrelational "distinctive disposition" raises Friedman's concern against the reductionism of culture to substance. Friedman's insight

into global relations that become part of local experience calls for rethinking the nature of sociality, communication, and bodily experience in similarly relational terms. I attempt this by suggesting an analytical methodology that combines pragmatism and existential phenomenology. I call the combination the *pragmatic phenomenological perspective*.

Pragmatism as a philosophical framework was established by Charles Peirce. His pragmatism (”pragmaticism” as he called it) elucidates the analytical distinctions between what one perceives, how one acts in reaction to perceptions, and what one understands about given perceptions.[4] A pragmatic approach allows a rigorous distinction between these perceptual phases. Because this capability requires no prefigured entities throughout the perceptual process, it is crucial for my purpose of seeking different ways of objectivizing experience. It affords the ethnographer a means of identifying their own way of objectivization. In following chapters, I will identify objectivizing manners of Western mountaineers and commentators, Korean mountaineers, and Walung Sherpas. This is by no means to essentialize their epistemology, ontology, and ethics in accordance to their ethnic, national, or regional identities. Instead, I will show continuity of the grounding regimes becomes conspicuous when comparing the three groups, so that they seem like “essentially” themselves.

The existential phenomenologies of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty deal with the second concern regarding humans being understood as social atoms. In this regard, I rework Geertz’s concept of disposition by bringing in Heidegger’s “disposedness”

[4] Peirce famously suggested the pragmatic maxim: “The elements of every concept enter into logical thought at the gate of perception and make their exit at the gate of purposive action; and whatever cannot show its passports at both those two gates is to be arrested as unauthorized by reason” (EP2:241).

(*Befindlichkeit*; §4.1)—that is, as Mark Wrathall puts it, "our way of being disposed to the world" (Wrathall 2006:32). Heidegger's thought is useful as it clarifies the process in which one is disposed to the world in a certain manner, or, as Michael Zimmerman puts it, is "appropriated as the site" for the self-disclosure of entities (Zimmerman 2006:300). This manner is what I mean by "cosmic disposition" (§4.1), a fundamental yet distinctive way of living. In his later years, moreover, Heidegger argued that, since around Plato's time, being has been naturalized in certain ways in Western humanity (esp. Heidegger 1977). I utilize this insight when I discuss Western approaches to understanding the Sherpa in Chapter 3. I will argue that an atomistic view of individuals or methodological individualism is what Westerners (both mountaineers and anthropologists) have presupposed in their pursuits in the Himalayas.

On the other hand, Merleau-Ponty's existential phenomenology focuses on the bodily phenomena and illuminates the "motivational relations existing between the external and internal worlds" (Merleau-Ponty 2002:424). Merleau-Ponty clarifies the invisible link that connects the once objectified perception with its origin that is not only typical but also "productive" (Merleau-Ponty 1968:208). That is, humans perceive not by virtue of their active orientation towards the world, but, to the contrary, by virtue of the active power of the "rays of the world" in which one takes a mere "dimensional this" (ibid.:l). By conceptualizing perceptual phenomena as a particular expression of various possibilities, one may conceive relatively different ways of behaving in a certain context, such as confronting colleague's death (§6.2).

In sum, the theoretical and ethnographic issues related to the concept of the cosmic may be investigated from a pragmatic phenomenological perspective. Again, this project is not to essentialize a national character nor is it a call for a return to the classical notion of culture. Rather, with a commitment to a fallibilistic (i.e. fundamental imperfection of our knowledge; EP2:25) objectivist standpoint,[5] it is to appreciate the limit of socio-historical perspectives, as any sociological or historical framing inevitably relies on the observer's capacity of objectivization. "Every description of society," the system theorist Niklas Luhmann says, "must take place within society [and] is bound to the basic structure of the operation of observing and can therefore not overcome the limitations this implies" (1998:78). A fallibilistic objectivist standpoint is one that embraces the limit of its own scope, admitting its inevitable naturalizing of its own cosmic world.

1.2 Research Questions, Methodology, and Progression

This section outlines the research questions, research methodology, and its progression for this dissertation and discusses a few concerns regarding them. I also address a few ethical concerns as related to the research and the representation of its data.

1.2.1 Research Question: How Sherpas Experience Himalayan Mountaineering

This dissertation attempts to answer the question: how Sherpas of Walung experience Himalayan mountaineering? This research question is a classic

[5] Peirce noted, "[O]ur knowledge is never absolute but always swims" (CP 1.171).

anthropological question in the sense that a number of anthropologists have considered Sherpa culture in the context of Himalayan mountaineering. Among 151 scholarly works about Sherpa published by 2005 (Gurung and Bhattachan 2006),[6] notably Robert Miller (1965), Sherry Ortner (1997; 1999), Vincanne Adams (1996; 1997), and James Fisher (1986; 1990) have engaged in the question. However, except for Mike Thompson (1979), no trained researchers have attempted to observe Sherpas both during and outside of participation in mountaineering expeditions. Indeed, the research question carries within it a methodological question: how can "experience" be studied ethnographically?

The implicit methodological question may be understood to refer to two separate issues. First, there is the issue of a researcher's perceptual capacity: one must inspect what kinds of epistemological, ontological, and ethical premises upon which one stands. In this research I combined my interests in Sherpa mountaineers with an interest in Korean mountaineers, because not only did I observed intercultural phenomena between Sherpa and Korean mountaineers, but also I identify my capacity as an observer as Korean. To make clear my mountaineering subjectivity as well as Sherpas' encounters with Koreans, Chapter 4 and 5 are devoted to identifying epistemological, ontological, and ethical premises as evident among Korean mountaineers. Second, one must choose where, whom, when, and how to observe and participate with Sherpas. This second methodological issue I discuss below.

[6] Gurung and Bhattachan (2006) have compiled the ethnological publications on Sherpa published until 2005 including monographs, scholarly articles, doctoral dissertations, and master theses and counted their number as 151. By 1949, the publications were three; by 1974, forty; by 1999, one hundred three; by 2005, four; and, no date, one.

2.2.2 Research Methodology

Sociocultural-anthropological field research has had two major methodological trends in recent decades (Gingrich 2013). One is the community-based approach that generally focuses on a single village, dwelling sector, work space, or other small, independent geographical unit. The other employs multi-sited fieldwork and emphasizes cultural and material flows, spatial connections, and different scales of observation. To collect data regarding experiential phenomena in Himalayan mountaineering, I conducted ethnographic field research that followed the latter, but also adopted some aspects of the former approach.

Because I aimed to gather data relevant to Sherpa epistemology, ontology, and ethics regarding mountaineering and because I imagined this study would require varied ethnographic data beyond mountain climbing, I elected to observe most features of Sherpa lives by participating in both mountaineering and everyday life before and after mountaineering. Moreover, since I wished to see how Sherpas were understood by others, including me in my capacity as an observer, I also decided to observe Korean mountaineers in much the same way, though to a lesser extent.

Before I began conducting field research, the expedition committee at the College of Agriculture Life Science Alpine Club, Seoul National University (CALSAC SNU) was already organizing the CALSAC SNU Everest Expedition in March 2012. They appointed me as the climbing leader. This was the start of my research. During the pilot research in December 2011 (a reconnaissance expedition for the Everest expedition), I

acquainted myself with a few Sherpa mountaineers, one of whom was influential in their community and who suggested to me to do research in his village. He was thirty-three-year-old Mingma Sherpa, the first Nepali who reached the tops of all fourteen of the over-eight-thousand-meter peaks. He was the managing director of the Seven Summit Treks and Tours (SST), a thriving expedition outfitter in Kathmandu. He came from a remote region called Walung, administratively Makalu-9 VDC (Village Development Committee), located in northern Sankhuwasabha district, northeastern Nepal. Walung is divided into two areas according to the elevation, and upper Walung, differently from the lower Walung, consists exclusively of Sherpa settlements. It is home to around six hundred Sherpas. Many young Sherpa men in the village engaged in the tourism industry of Himalayan mountaineering and trekking, moving back and forth between the village and Kathmandu. In the capital, many of them also rented rooms to stay in around a sector called Akasidhara in the northeastern corner of Kathmandu (§6.2). To move between the two locations, it normally takes three or four days on foot, by jeep, and by airplane (or a night bus).

During my research period, apart from participation in expeditions, I also moved between these two places, as well as between Nepal and Korea, following both Sherpa and Korean mountaineers. The research period spanned from March 2012 through March 2014. Including the pilot research period, it took a total of 744 days (100%). I participated in nine mountaineering expeditions (Table 1-1), which took a total of 318 days (43%). I made six trips to the Sherpa village, which took 117 days (16%). Also, I

Table 1-1. The expeditions I participated in during the research.

Expedition Title	Peak Attempted	Period	Duration	No. of Members	No. of Hired Staff
CALSAC SNU Everest Reconnaissance & Lobuche East Expedition, 2011	Lobuche East (6,119m/20,075ft)	Dec. 16, 2011 – Jan. 5, 2012	21	3	2
CALSAC SNU Everest Expedition	Mt. Everest (8,848m/29,029ft), Lhotse (8,516m/27,940ft)	Mar. 30 – May. 26, 2012	58	3	6
Annapurna Search Expedition	Annapurna 1 (8,091m/26,545ft) – Search Mission	Aug. 6 – Aug. 20, 2012	15	9	11
Korea Peace Everest Expedition	Mt. Everest (8,848m/29,029ft), Lhotse (8,516m/27,940ft)	Aug. 25 – Oct. 25, 2012	62	10	8
Himalayan Mountaineering Course, Kolon Alpine School	Yala Peak (5,520m/18,110m)	Oct. 26 – Nov. 10, 2012	16	12	12
Korean Everest-Lhotse Expedition	Mt. Everest (8,848m/29,029ft), Lhotse (8,516m/27,940ft)	Mar. 29 – May 29, 2013	62	6	12
AOK Korea Amphu 1 Expedition	Amphu 1 (6,840m/22,441ft)	Sep. 16 – Oct. 28, 2013	43	4	7
Himalayan Mountaineering Course, Kolon Alpine School	Tserko Peak (5,742m/18,339ft)	Nov. 3 – Nov. 20, 2013	18	8	12
Langtang Wanderers	Gangja La Peak (5,675m/18,619ft), Naya Kanga (5,863m/19,236ft), Yubra (6,264m/20,551ft)	Dec. 30, 2013 – Jan. 21, 2014	23	2	1

visited South Korea six times, which took another 168 days (22%). I stayed in Kathmandu for 141 days (19%).

In Walung, I stayed in the house of Ang Temba in Nishar (a settlement in the upper Walung) for the most part. This was the father of Tendi, a twenty-three-year-old Sherpa who was hired at the 2012 CALSAC SNU Everest Expedition. Tendi suggested

that I stay at Ang Temba's place if I wished to visit the village. I learned Sherpa from these individuals and others. There is no textbook of the Walung Sherpa dialect, which is partly incommensurable with the Sherpa language spoken in Solukhumbu district.[7] Compensating Tendi's family for their support was inappropriate. However, I did show gratitude by material gifts, such as packs of rice and clothes. It was also evident that their hosting me—an influential person in terms of mountaineering-related connections—as their pseudo-family member was itself a source of pride, more valuable than monetary compensation for their service to me would have been.

Building an intimate relationship with a small group of people in a community may generate a situation in which one may see deeper and wider aspects of the group while also making it harder to approach those in other groups. This was true in my research in the Walung village. However, without building such close relationships with a limited number of community members, it would have been much harder to conduct ethnographic research at this site.

In Kathmandu, I stayed at the home of twenty-six-year-old "Kancha" Pasang. He is the youngest of the six Mingma brothers, four of whom, including Pasang, were working as the directors of SST. His place was right next to the office of the company. This location, as well as the interpersonal connections I initiated with those key figures, allowed me to observe Sherpa daily lives and experiences relating to mountaineering in close proximity and intimacy. Moreover, seven of the nine expeditions in which I

[7] In contrast, a number of textbooks and dictionaries are published on SoluKhumbu Sherpa, including A. Sherpa (1999), Dzho (2006), G. Sherpa (2010), L. Sherpa, C. Sherpa and Krämer (2006), N. Sherpa (2006) and Tournadre et al. (2009).

participated were launched under contract with SST. In one case (the 2012 Korea Everest Peace Expedition), my personal relationship with the Sherpas influenced the leader's decision to change the outfitter to SST.

The nine mountaineering expeditions were all Korean, and yet the characters and events occurring on these expeditions were diverse. This diversity is another methodologically crucial aspect of this dissertation. They included a stereotypically guided expedition in the popular spring season of Mt. Everest (2012 CALSAC SNU), two extraordinary expeditions on the same mountain (one in the harder autumn season and one without using oxygen), one Alpine-style first-ascent climb (2013 Amphu I), two Korean-guided mountaineering schools (Kolon), one dead-body search mission (Annapurna), one on a "Trekking" peak (i.e., a popular form of Himalayan mountaineering in Nepal relatively easier than ordinary eight-thousand-meter-peak climbs; pilot research), and one two-membered, "light-and-fast" climb (Langtang Wanderers). Two expeditions were awarded for their climbing achievements (Amphu Exp. with Park Young-Seok Special Award in 2013; Langtang Exp. with the same award in 2014 and Kim Jeong-Tae Korean Mountaineering Award in 2014). I was a leader (twice), an instructor-guide (twice), and otherwise a climbing member. Two fatal accidents took place in my groups. Five climbers in my acquaintance died in the Himalayas during the research period. There were also two cases of hallucinating mountaineers. This high degree of diversity in terms of experiential phenomena of mountaineering as well as my social position in the expeditions supplied ample cases that support the theoretical claims advanced in this dissertation.



Figure 1-1. The researcher's position. In the 2012 Korea Peace Everest Expedition, I was leading a meeting with climbing Sherpas and a cook at Camp Two of Mt. Everest, October 16, 2012. In all nine expeditions in which I joined during the research period, I, as a climbing member, often acted a mediator between Korean mountaineers and the Nepali staff. Photo by the author.

In mountaineering expeditions, I acted as a climbing "member" as other members do. I associated myself with other Korean members—with them, I climbed, talked (in Korean), relaxed, ate, and so on. I rarely did those things with Sherpas on the mountain. Though most of the Koreans knew I was in the process of research, I did not explicitly ask them to partake of interviews or other research-related activities, largely because my primary concern was with Sherpas, rather than Koreans. Because I was able to converse in Nepali (and a little in Sherpa), I frequently talked with Nepali staff and Sherpa climbers, informally and formally. In many cases, I mediated between the two parties in expeditions (Figure 1-1). My role as a mediator was not only appreciated by other

Koreans but was an essential element of each expedition—in any case, every expedition needs someone to do it.

With regard to finances, most expeditions were sponsored from external sources. Climbing members might contribute with nominal fees (e.g. one million Korean Won or nine hundred dollars at both the 2012 Peace Everest Exp. and the 2013 Everest Exp.). They also paid the cost for my airplane tickets to Korea, to have me in the starting ceremonies and in the disbanding ceremonies. This was how I moved between the two countries.

In Korea, my home country, it was hard for me to keep a journal, as opposed to when I was in Nepal. To do so required greater attention. I found that, depending on the measure of personal intimacy with the research environment, one needs differing approaches to methodological techniques including keeping a journal (hand writing or using electronic devices), applying technologies (camera, Internet, etc.), allocating time to research and other activities, and so on.

Ultimately, the research involved extensive participation in mountaineering expeditions. This concentration is by no means typical of most nonlocal Himalayan mountaineers.[8] Normally a mountaineer would not be able to prearrange joining expeditions in the way. Korean Himalayan mountaineers ordinarily determine their participation in (or organization of) the climb a few months before their expedition starts.

[8] An exception to this would be those mountaineers who continue serial mountaineering quests such as climbing all the fourteen over-eight-thousand-meter peaks. Their patterns vary, from aiming for one peak a year to aiming for three or four a year. No one among my foreign informants in this dissertation climbed in this concentrated way during this research period. A few Koreans who appear in this dissertation completed the journey before this research began.

In my case, I had to plan, discuss, request, or decline the suggestions of expedition participation as the research proceeded. In doing so, I used my own previous relationships with Koreans. There is no "expedition posting" where a mountaineer might select an expedition and apply for it, and, so, personal connections are all the more essential for joining an expedition. This was especially true in my case since I was unable to see key figures in person while I was absent in Korea.

Hence, the progression of this research is not only unconventional but peculiar. If from this dissertation ordinary researchers or mountaineers find opinions very different from theirs, the difference owes, I argue, to the range of observations being structured by how one is situated as well as by where one is situated. Regarding the researcher's social position, Lila Abu-Lughod has argued that "'reality' is structured by social experience as determined by social position" (1988:152). My position of being a mountaineer doubtlessly influenced the scope of data I collected and my analyses in this dissertation. Also, my identity of being Korean helped me view the Sherpa-foreigner encounter in Himalayan mountaineering as local-versus-nonlocal instead of local-versus-Western.

A researcher's perspective is not only situated by a researcher's social position as such, but transformed as well throughout the processes of research. The processual demands of this research produced two methodological constraints that have influenced the results of the research. The first is that, because interpersonal relationships focused on a limited number of people, whether Sherpas or Koreans, the processes of my expedition participation were increasingly streamlined. If mountaineering experience means more than acts of climbing and encompasses, as Richard Mitchell (1983) says, planning,

preparations, conditioning, recollections, and maintaining social relationships, I was compelled to forgo many parts of the experience that seriously influenced the expeditionary experience for other participants.

Another limitation occurred, owing to the unusual progression of the research, as I simultaneously assumed the positions of fieldworker and mountaineer. Himalayan mountaineering is a challenging sport, both mentally and bodily. Except in one case (the Annapurna Search Expedition), I climbed high on the mountain. To climb a Himalayan peak, a mountaineer should condition his or her mind and body to feel comfortable on the mountain. Also, participation in an expedition typically requires at least a couple of weeks to recover the climber's mind and body. Sherpas have their own ways to refresh themselves after the completion of an expedition: they normally allow an extensive period of time to relax (not engaging in labor) both in Kathmandu and in their villages. Other Korean mountaineers, too, after finalizing the expeditions, followed their own practices as they returned to their country. In my case, I was compelled to forego normal recuperative practices with family and friends in order to conduct field research at a remote Sherpa village. During expeditions, moreover, my mind was fully occupied with negotiating mountaineer's issues (such as "how to condition myself today for tomorrow's climb"; "climb tomorrow or not"; "what if I die," and so on). In this regard, interviews and population surveys were hard to carry into practice. Taking notes was the most I could do in terms of research activity during the expeditions. In short, research received less attention due to the stress involved in participation in mountaineering. On the other hand, this intensified stressful research condition became regular, so that, in the later

stages of the research, I was able to participate in long, rich conversations with Sherpa even under harsh conditions, such as at the final camp of Mt. Everest. While taking into account the limitations of this research process, I nonetheless suggest that the comparatively long period of time taken to conduct the ethnographic research may offset to some extent the limit of observational scope.

With regard to ethical practice in the conducting of this research, I have carefully represented several fatal accidents in ways that will not bring harm to anyone involved. I have used pseudonyms to protect privacy. I have also omitted descriptions of contexts by which any reader might conjecture the identity of an individual mentioned. While no dissertation can ever be entirely free from ethical issues, I have made every effort to ensure the safety of all concerned.

In sum, the methodological design of this research makes this study different from most previous studies of Sherpa and Himalayan mountaineering. Ethnographic data was collected through research that was processually responsive to changing circumstances and proceeded in an irregular manner with regard to standard practices for Himalayan mountaineering. The progression of research, as well as the social position of researcher, has influenced the scope of collected data and the ethnographic performance of the researcher. Limitations notwithstanding, it did serve to enable the researcher to make observations diverse enough to consider the mobile and global nature of Himalayan mountaineering from a Sherpa-informed point of view.

I.3 Dissertation Construction

To present Sherpa experiences in a way that may reconcile socio-historical and phenomenological perspectives, the dissertation is divided into eight chapters and constructed as follows. In the next chapter I begin by asking who "Sherpas" are and lay out the pragmatic phenomenological perspective. By reviewing existing studies on Sherpa identity and history, I point out a eurocentric assumption such as the distinction between history and mythology when selectively collecting data among the Sherpas. My argument is that time and place as the elemental components of Sherpa life are not objectively pre-given but cosmically ordered by ritualized as well as haphazard practices. I suggest as the epistemic structure "preobjective manner" as opposed to "potential objectivities." Sherpa patterned ways of naming practices (potentials objectivities)—such as first name, full name, teknonymy, territoriality, and social relation—exemplify the invisible operation of the preobjective manners in the Sherpas' practices of identification.

The third chapter delineates how Western mountaineers and anthropologists have viewed the Sherpa and their encounters with Westerners. By critically reading their writings, I wish to show how eurocentric epistemology, ontology, and ethics are grounded in the discourses, so that this tendency may be avoided in later chapters. Since my dissertation research did not focus on Western mountaineering beyond a few chance encounters, this chapter attains to a critique rather than an ethnographic discussion. However, its conceptual constructions will contribute to the overall goals of the dissertation: by what I call "anthromanticism," the Sherpa are conceptualized as a combination of mind as separate from body, the body as separate from community, and

the community as the sum total of the mind-body binaries. Therefore, the Sherpa are considered to be best illuminated through the established disciplinary divisions of psychology, physiology, and sociology. Based on this epistemological frame, the rise and practices of anthropology parallel those of exploratory and mountaineering expeditions. Both further sustain an epistemic modernity project that ontologically divides Nature and Culture. In doing so, Sherpa-versus-Westerner relationship has been exclusively viewed from the eurocentric ethics of individualist and egalitarian ideals.

The fourth chapter deals with the Korean cosmic disposition as evident in experiences of Korean mountaineers. This chapter suggests the concept of cosmic disposition as schematized by historical, textual, genealogical, and ethnographic analyses. As for the Korean cosmic disposition, the chapter suggests a tripartite model: Confucian hierarchy, Buddhist dualism, and Taoist idealism. The coordination of the three traditions are omnipresent and observable not merely as ideological representations but from most mountaineering experiences of Koreans from the beginning of the sport in the early twentieth century to this day.

Continuing the discussion of Korean mountaineering and its enduring pattern, the fifth chapter focuses on Korean mountaineers' Himalayan mountaineering experience. It also suggests the concept of "cosmic process" referring to a reciprocal unfolding of cosmic disposition. This basic regime of being in the world is also observable from contemporary Korean Mt. Everest climbers, hallucinating mountaineers and their colleagues, and their perception of Sherpas.

The sixth chapter delineates Sherpa participation in Himalayan mountaineering and suggests a threefold cosmic disposition as exhibited by Sherpas of Walung: individualist collectivism, tantric monism, and open-closed chronology. The chapter argues that, in accordance with these cosmic dispositions, Sherpas of Walung distinctively know, act, and matter when they move to Kathmandu, climb Himalayan peaks, encounter foreign mountaineers, and envision their own futures. Sherpas of Walung do not form a community in a sector of Kathmandu by virtue of their origin, but they do so by implementing dual social forces which I call "external integration" and "internal collection." Also, the basic principle of cosmic ordering in their "semi-nomadic" form of traditional lifestyle continues when they participate in "semi-migratory" lifestyles in Kathmandu, as they engage in Himalayan mountaineering in seasonal terms.

The seventh chapter focuses on a semiotic notion of embodiment. Drawing from Peirce's semiotic and Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, the sixth chapter suggests three hypothetical phases of embodiment: "immersion," "cast," and "transmission." This conception of embodiment helps to understand the difference exhibited by Sherpa and Korean mountaineers in their reactions to death occurring during mountaineering expeditions. The difference is explained by the differences in the "authorship of affect" and "ontic techniques." The chapter attempts to view culturally communicative gestures such as Sherpa laughter in terms of the pragmatic significance they carry.

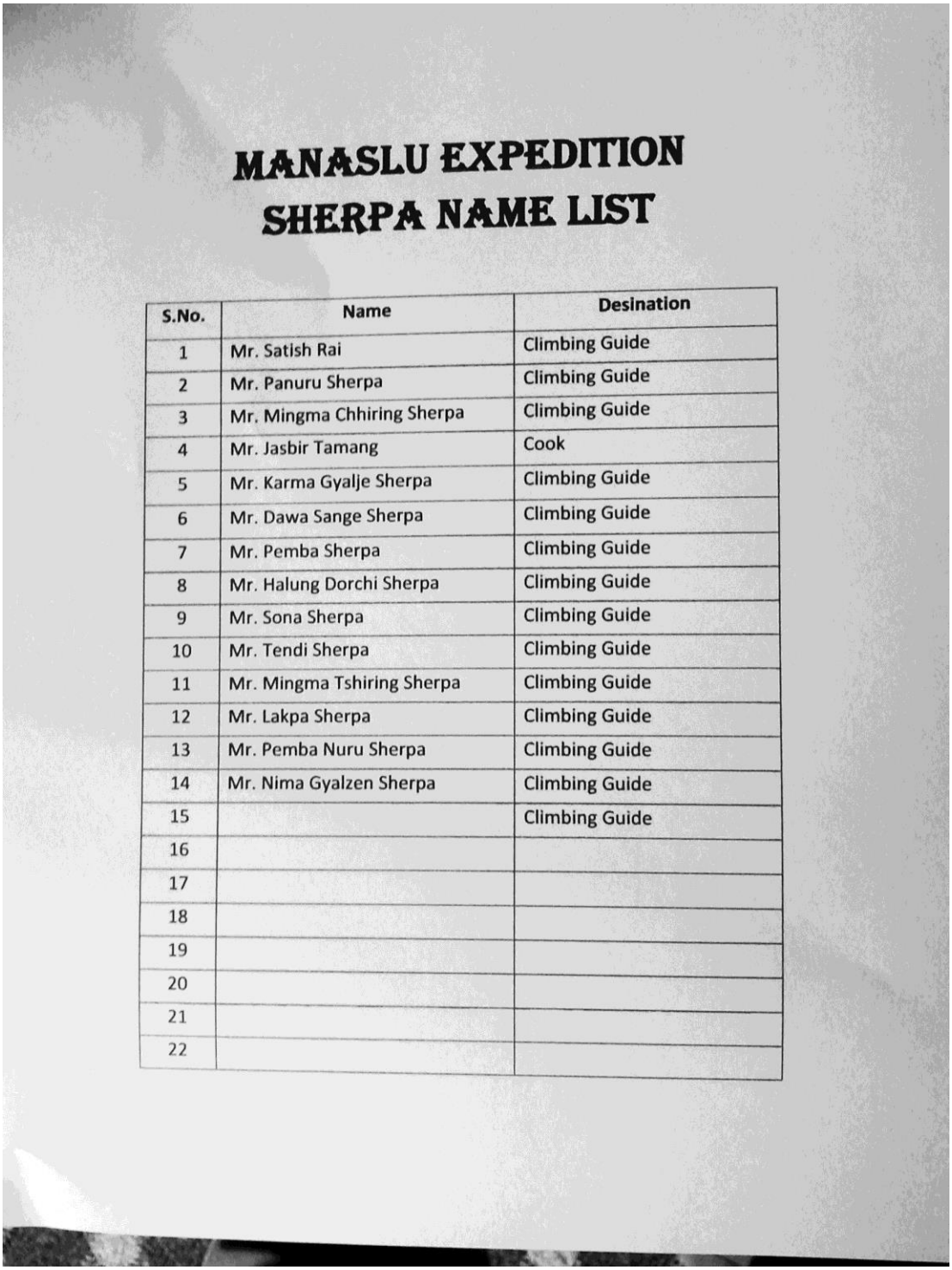
The final chapter summarizes key issues developed throughout the chapters. It also identifies topics for further research.

Chapter 2. A Pragmatic Phenomenological Perspective to Sherpa Epistemic Practices

2.1 Introduction: An Epistemological Question, "Who are Sherpa?"

Those who know little of Himalayan mountaineering and the people of Nepal often regard the name "Sherpa" as referring to the occupational position of mountain guides in the Himalayas. By origin, the name indicates an ethnic group of people who have dwelt on the southern slopes of the Himalaya of northeastern Nepal for several hundred years. From the beginning of the twentieth century, an increasing number of ethnic Sherpas have joined Himalayan mountaineering expeditions as load carriers, camp servants, and climbing assistants, and more recently as climbing guides, base camp managers, and tourism outfitters. Although in Nepal there are many other ethnic groups who are linguistically, culturally, and biologically Tibetan highlanders, it is exclusively Sherpas who have been the main actors in Himalayan mountaineering and related sectors today. Before investigating this transformation, this chapter, as one is compelled to identify who the Sherpas are, discusses theoretical issues related to the identification.

The designation of "Sherpa" referring to mountain guide or high-altitude porter is indeed customary and legitimate. Tourism is one of the most significant economic options for most of the Sherpa males and has been constantly thriving in the country. Most Makalu Sherpa men from around twenty to forty years old are prepared for employment at one or more tourism agencies. Whether or not foreign visitors are aware of the original meaning of "Sherpa," the designation of Sherpa is now freely used by both



MANASLU EXPEDITION
SHERPA NAME LIST

S.No.	Name	Desination
1	Mr. Satish Rai	Climbing Guide
2	Mr. Panuru Sherpa	Climbing Guide
3	Mr. Mingma Chhiring Sherpa	Climbing Guide
4	Mr. Jasbir Tamang	Cook
5	Mr. Karma Gyalje Sherpa	Climbing Guide
6	Mr. Dawa Sange Sherpa	Climbing Guide
7	Mr. Pemba Sherpa	Climbing Guide
8	Mr. Halung Dorchi Sherpa	Climbing Guide
9	Mr. Sona Sherpa	Climbing Guide
10	Mr. Tendi Sherpa	Climbing Guide
11	Mr. Mingma Tshiring Sherpa	Climbing Guide
12	Mr. Lakpa Sherpa	Climbing Guide
13	Mr. Pemba Nuru Sherpa	Climbing Guide
14	Mr. Nima Gyalzen Sherpa	Climbing Guide
15		Climbing Guide
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		

Figure 2-1. Employment Announcement for Seven Summit Treks Manaslu Expedition, Fall 2012. Photo by the author.

foreign visitors and the Nepalis to refer to the occupational position at mountaineering and trekking expeditions and other tourism industries. To avoid confusion, I will call the occupational referent "climbing Sherpa."[9]

Take, for example, the official staff list in Figure 2-1 for the international Manaslu (8,163m/26,759ft) expedition in fall 2013. The document was produced by a Sherpa-owned expedition agency for internal use before launching the expedition. In the document, the word "Sherpa" is used in two senses, indicating personal surname and the whole official staff. An identification of appointed individuals' full legal names is this document's *raison d'être*, though this document is not intended for a bureaucratic purpose. Here, the category of climbing Sherpa is named "Climbing Guide" as used in governmental administrations. The Climbing Guide in this expedition includes one whose surname is Rai (No. 1) and who is therefore ethnically non-Sherpa. The list also includes a cook (No. 4). Hence, the word "Sherpa" in the head refers to the whole official staff of the expedition since the "official staff" ordinarily comprises climbing guides and cook. The diagram in Figure 2-2 illustrates the usage of the name "Sherpa" as related to Himalayan mountaineering expedition.

[9] BBC recently named such mountaineers "sherpa" with the lower case "s," regardless of their ethnic/caste categories, reserving "Sherpa" with the capital S for ethnic Sherpa so as to avoid confusion—confusion, and a solution as well, of course only to readers of the alphabet. In fact, Tashi Tenzing, a grandson of Tenzing Norgay Sherpa who firstly reached the top of Mt. Everest with Edmund Hillary in 1953, has noticed that this has been the case as early as the first decade of the twentieth century, in some of the Western mountaineers' categorizing of the mountain workers (Tenzing 2001:xxi). This alphabetical distinction has never been popular nor legitimatized on the ground.

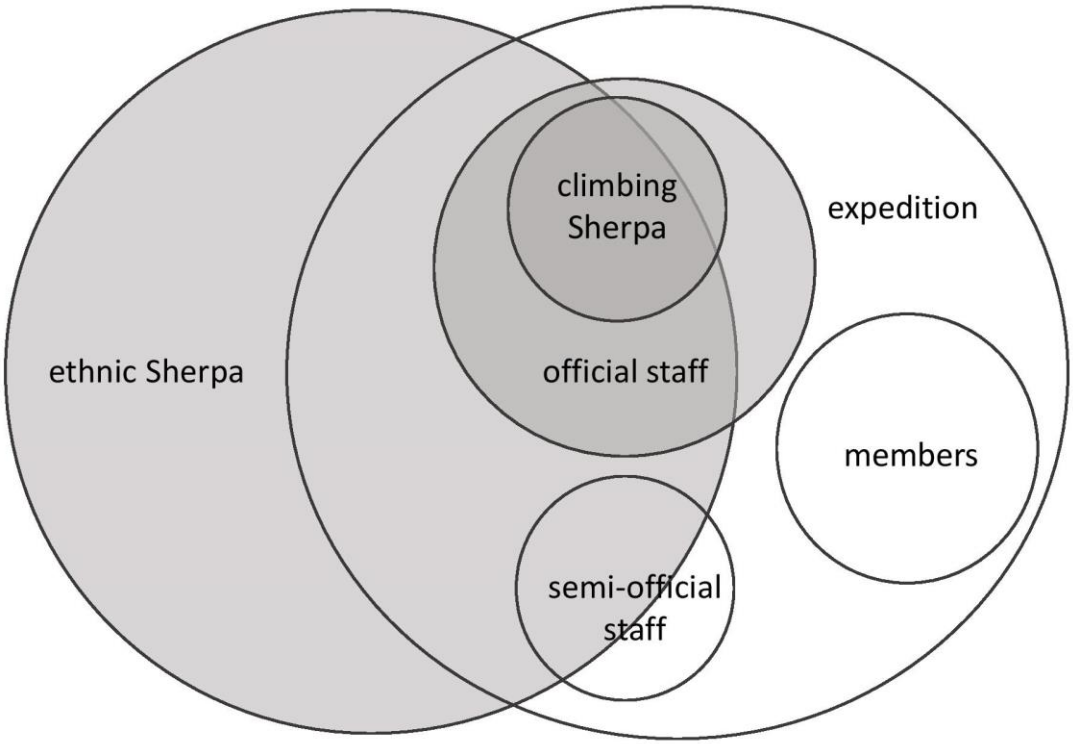


Figure 2-2. Diagram illustrating the usage of the name "Sherpa" as related to Himalayan mountaineering. The gray area denotes the individuals who are commonly referred to as "Sherpa." Constructed by the author.

The manner of identification implemented in the document seems far different from what is normally used by the Nepalis themselves. No Sherpa calls each other by their full legal names. If asked, for example, "who is Pemba Sherpa? (No. 7)," most Sherpas affiliated with the agency will ask back, "which Pemba?" Questions might follow: "Do you mean Pemba of Nimbir or Pemba of Nurbuchaaur?" Both qualifications refer to Sherpa settlements. For most Nepalis, the identities of their autochthonous villages unanimously carries significance, so that, as Anne de Sales writes, "*They speak of themselves when they speak of their village*" (2011:4).



Figure 2-3. Part of South Asia. Drawn by the author.

In multi-ethnic contexts such as Himalayan mountaineering, people from upper Walung[10] of northeastern Nepal ordinarily call themselves "Makalu Sherpa" to distinguish themselves from "Khumbu" (near Mt. Everest), "Solu" (to the south of Khumbu), "Taplejung" (northeastern end of Nepal), or "Darjeeling" (northeastern India) Sherpas.[11] "Makalu" in the name refers to the administrative unit, Makalu VDC (Village

[10] The name "Walung" is confusing. Along the upper reaches of the Tamur Valley, about fifty miles to the east of the Arun River across Lumbha Sumbha Himal, there is also a people known to live in "Walung" (Gurung and Bhattachan 2006; Sherpa 2001; Ukyab and Adhikari 2000) or "Olangchung" (Bista 2004). Bista (2004:205) notes that the local name of the main village is "Holung," while the government designation is Olangchung Gola.

[11] Any Sherpa would start to differentiate themselves from these place names plus Rolwaling, and



Figure 2-4. Mani constructed at the mouth of Nurbuchaur, the uppermost settlement of Walung, northeastern Nepal. Photo by the author.

Development Committee), in which the settlements are located (Figures 2-4, 2-5). If they need to distinguish themselves from the people of Seduwa, northeast of Walung and yet still within the Makalu VDC, or from those of southwesterly adjacent Yaphu VDC, they would refer to themselves as of "Walung," instead of "Makalu." Walung, separated from the two regions by deep gorges and narrow-yet-wild rivers, is further divided into upper

Helambu. Although the Khumbu region of Solukhumbu district, which encloses Mt. Everest, is well known to be the "Homeland of Sherpa" as such, it has never homed wholly for *the* Sherpa of Nepal, erroneously sanctioned by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf's 1964 work entitled *The Sherpas of Nepal: Buddhist Highlanders*, which exclusively concerns Sherpas of Khumbu and thus criticized as too ambitious by Alexander W. Macdonald (1975) and David Snellgrove (1966).

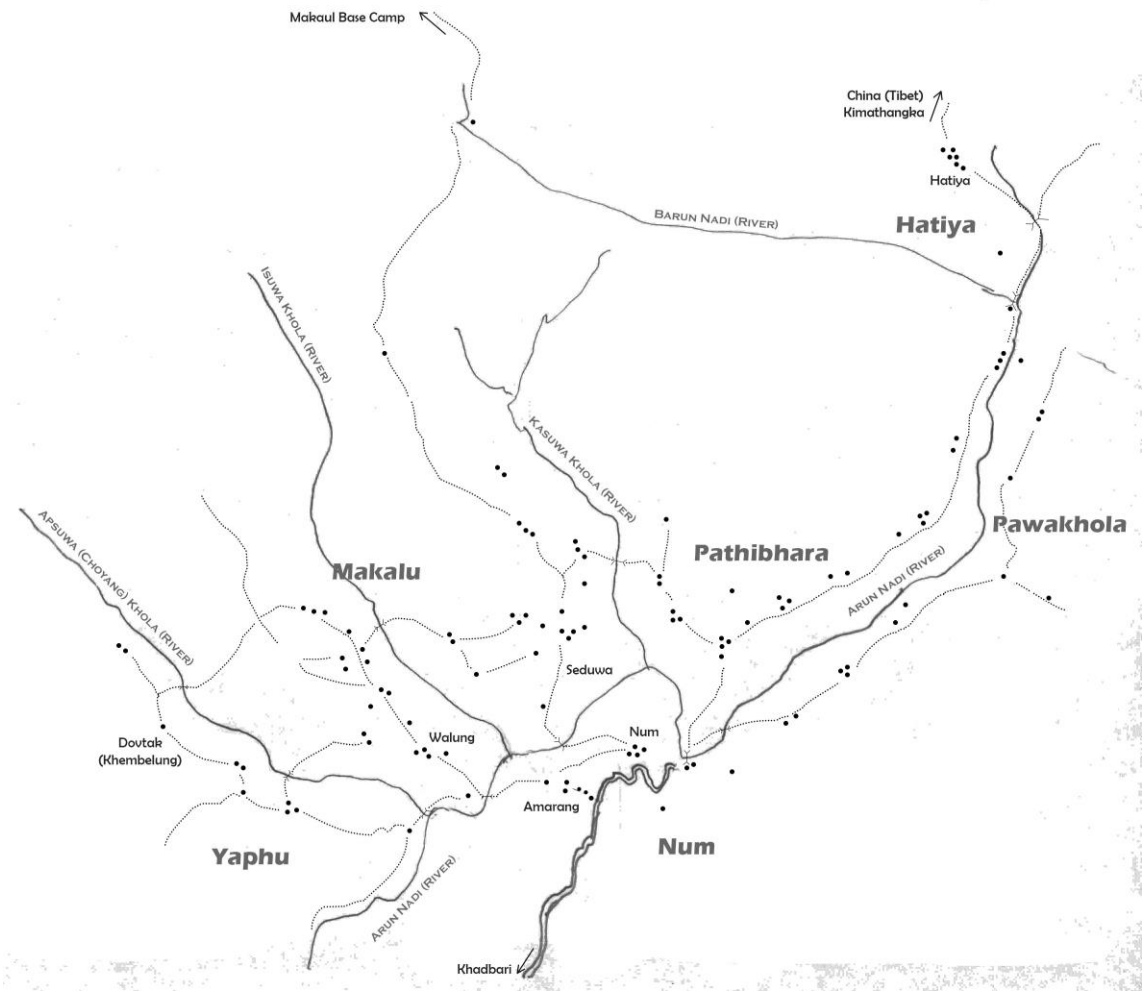


Figure 2-5. Northwestern Sankhuwasabha District, northeastern Nepal. Drawn by the author.

and lower Walung. All Sherpas in Walung live in the upper half, and the distinction between the upper and the lower Walung is clear-cut not only in geographic and demographic senses but also in the spiritual sense: a few series of *mani* (sacred piles of stone) at the mouth of the upper Walung, marking sacred borderlines between inside and outside the community as widely practiced in Central and South Asia (Dollfus 2014), indicates a clear sign that divides Sherpa settlements in the upper and non-Sherpa settlements in the lower.

When they introduce themselves to those in the lower Walung—Kulunge Rai, Jimi Rai, and Kami—they are less likely to describe themselves as "upper Walung" but, rather, to refer to their respective hamlet or father. While the specification of "upper Walung" will be used if necessary, it is not the upper Walung, but Walung *per se*, which they identify in their everyday lives with their *yul* (S. T.), or village. Thus, it is noticeable that two different principles, namely geographical contrast and interpersonal grouping, are applied in their identification of themselves according to the context in which they are situated. A simple geographical contrast is applied when specifying themselves as "Makalu" against "Solu," "Taplejung" or other far-off Sherpa regions, whereas interpersonal grouping is assumed in the specifying of "Walung" in distinction to the adjacent settlements of "Seduwa" and "Yaphu," risking identification with non-Sherpas in the lower Walung.

This brief illustration of Walung Sherpas' identification patterns exposes an intricacy implicit in the interplay among four categorical concepts: ethnic identity, regional identity, interpersonal nexus, and occupational status. In his account of Nuer political relations, Edward E. Evans-Pritchard (1940:110) designed a theoretical framework on this point and suggested the concept "structural distance," meaning "the distance between groups of persons in a social system, expressed in terms of values" depending on contexts. In Walung Sherpa's case, the structural distance is not so much straightforward as illogical. No single principle, such as ethnic opposition or geographical distribution, can be assumed intrinsic to identification for the Sherpas. This issue is not simply due, as Nancy Levine once noted, to a "lack of adequate analytic

concepts for describing exotic systems" (1981:52-3), nor is it resolvable by supplementing our conceptual vocabulary with newly found so-called local knowledge. To turn analytic attention to the process of "boundary making," as opposed to the product of it, as many South Asian specialists have endeavored since the publication of Frederik Barth's seminal essay (1969), seems to evade a latent dilemma. Walung Sherpa's identification practices seem inconsistent with societal concepts such as ethnicity, employment, kinship, religious affiliation, and regional identity. These are, I would argue, beyond Durkheimian-Maussian social facts being out there, but inseparably intermingled at certain perceptive levels. This "pre-societal" problem does not immediately address the issues of identity crisis or of the sense of belonging, two of the most popular topics in South Asian Studies today. Instead, in answering the question "who are Sherpa?" one needs to first address *how Sherpas perceive "Sherpa."* This chapter aims to uncover the manner in which Sherpas perceive an object and make it out; it seeks Sherpa epistemology, before investigating local categorization or local knowledge.

The question compels one to trace the history of Sherpa; I delineate this history first. But, it will bring forward an epistemological problem in relation to the task of questioning their origin. Thus, I will discuss three village rituals, focusing on ritualized affirming of Sherpa cosmology. Next, I examine public identification practices including naming systems, lineage systems, and geographic categorization. Finally, I return to investigate a modern usage of the term "Sherpa" regarding occupational titles in mountain tourism sectors in contemporary Nepal.

2.2 Epistemic Structure: A Pragmatic Phenomenological Perspective

In anthropology, two theoretical frameworks are so far prominent: objectivist and subjectivist positions. The subjectivist position has risen recent decades by criticizing the objectivist view which has been popular during the classic period of the discipline's history, a period Renato Rosaldo describes as having a "monopoly on objectivity" (1989:48). In the objectivist position, a researcher would, with a premise of "multiple reality" as the sociologist Alfred Schütz (1945) puts it, seek to identify sorts of medium, mechanism, or "concept" (as does Levine above), which can be the most effective in describing unfamiliar behaviors. Scholars in the position would assume to possibly explicate all alien social and cultural systems by virtue of one and single sort of objectivity which is universal and is ordered distinctively in accordance to the subject matter.[12] This pan-objectivity approach aims at bringing to light indigenous meaning systems, assumed as (less civilized) variants of the eurocentric one. This objectivist position has revealed an annoying problem, as it hardly considers the formation of social

[12] To what extent the orderings of reality are multiple has been one of the main concerns in the objectivist tradition in anthropology (Tambiah 1990). Related to the topic in question, Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's (1926[1910]) intriguing thought on primitive mentality has raised a good deal of debate in anthropology in the first half of the twentieth century. He asserted that primitives applied a principle of thought peculiar to them, so that "primitives perceive nothing in the same way as we do" (ibid., 43). Such a relativizing position could not be admitted by the British social anthropologists of the functional and the structural-functional traditions including Bronislaw Malinowski who bowdlerized the idea (1955[1948]). Evans-Pritchard also turned down this view, saying "Men in each society express them in the particular *idiom* of their culture ... If we want to understand human beings, therefore, we must always get behind their ideas and study their behavior" (Evans-Pritchard 1965:96). Lévy-Bruhl, in turn, modified his view and yet advocated his concept "law of participation," by which collective representations of different societies could be built upon cultural premises and categories that are very different from the modern form of thought (1975[1949]; Tambiah 1990). His inspiration, that thinking as apparatus of an individual is attributable to collectivities of each society, has resonated with, among others, earlier phenomenological theorists such as Schütz.

subjectivity. Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann expressed the suffocating mood, claiming, "Society is a human product. Society is an objective reality. Man is a social product" (1967:61). Because the objectivist position claims an invincible scientific status of its observation, some subjectivists criticize the position as it sometimes "serves the interests of dominant social groups" (Spiro 2006:523).

Subjectivist theorists have focused on the "social production of man," as it were, in historical, discursive, materialist, and other ways. The main thesis of this position has been more or less on the divergences of viewpoints: people are considered to experience their intersubjective world either through particular perspectives which are inevitably veiled diaphanously (Rescher 1985:187), or from historically situated standpoints (Ortner 2006), or within cultural logics or categories (Cohn 1987). In this position, an ethnography of Sherpa community would be to describe historical and social circumstances that have framed Sherpa's perspective, standpoint, or viewpoint, that is, the principal faculty of the subject. This approach submits a vantage point from which a researcher may be able to make sensible the processes in which, through their own practices, people continue to evolve toward the generation of particular "desire," "intention," or "interest" (Ortner 1989; 1999) or to contribute to the reproduction of the established order and to the perpetuation of domination that remains hidden (Bourdieu 1977). In short, the subjectivist scholarship investigates the production of subjectivity as it is historically and culturally situated.

Both the objectivist and subjectivst positions do not consider differences in a more fundamental level, differences in perception of social reality, pragmatic significance

of social relations, unconscious modes of empathy, practices of the past, present, and future, distance between good and bad, moments of visceral, bodily, and obscure sense absorption, and the like. Both inevitably return to the presumptions of what Philippe Descola calls "academic eurocentrism," which consists in believing that "our own *manner* of objectivizing is universally shared" (Descola 2013b:33). In this belief, according to Descola, other systems of conceptualizing the world appear incomplete and thus are "alternative to our own but as more or less exotic ways of accounting for the state of a world that our own system of conceptualization has established" (Descola 2013b:33).

In an attempt to avoid privileging a particular "manner of objectivizing," the methodology I suggest is a pragmatic phenomenology, specifically a combination of Peirce and Heidegger.[13] This framework is not what Marshall Sahlins (1995:153-4) calls "the native Western praxis theory of knowledge," by which one knows things as their utilities, not through their use, and so naturally assumes "a certain kind of subject acting in specific relation to external objects." Peircean pragmatism reaches beyond merely

[13] There exist various conjunctions and unions between the traditions of pragmatism and of phenomenology. Though Peirce himself has developed what may be called pragmatic phenomenology in his study of signs—what he termed "phaneroscopy" adopting the Greek word phaneros (φανερός) meaning "visible" or "showable"—it is Alfred Schütz who firstly and deliberately sought a correlation between traditions of American pragmatism and European phenomenology. In his later years, he has brought some insights on social phenomena from his discussion between James's pragmatism and Husserl's phenomenology (e.g. Schütz 1945). Later, the coinage ("pragmatic phenomenology") has been used in another combination of both disciplines (e.g. Craig 2010) along with references to the orthodox Peircean tradition (e.g. Ness 2011). On the other hand, Heidegger is known to have developed his existential phenomenology pragmatically, as Richard J. Bernstein notes, "Although 'being-in-the-world' is not an expression that any of the classical American pragmatists ever used, it beautifully articulates the pragmatic understanding of the transaction that takes place between human organisms and their environment—a transaction that involves know-how and is the basis for knowing-that" (2010:20). Axel Honneth (2008) points out Heidegger prioritizing practical significance over cognitive subject and finds affinity between Heidegger and John Dewey (cf. Dreyfus 1991).

"practicalism," or "empirical understanding" (Sahlins 1995:153), which presupposes the world as a precondition for a presumed subject, as advocated by Enlightenment thinkers. Peirce once characterized pragmatism as a method of ascertaining the meaning of intellectual concepts, the whole meaning of which must include not only perceptual or existential facts, but also all potential pathways, or "*would-acts*" of habitual behavior (EP2:402). What I am taking from Peircean pragmatism is his insight for an empiricism being open to both the inexhaustible past and the indeterminable future.

Heidegger's phenomenology specifically focuses on the way in which a human makes out his or her own being in the world. In the making-out, Heidegger describes, an individual "always lets entities be encountered as ready-to-hand" (Heidegger 2008:119), rather than conducting "the cognitive and conceptual grasp of things that one normally thinks of as understanding" (Dreyfus and Wrathall 2005:5). In regard to the current project, he brings to light the ontological significance those entities hold in relation to an individual, contrary to a conception that treats them as mere things-out-there and that posits significance on the *production* of those entities in active sense (Heidegger 2001:15-86). With this concept of a sort of pre-subjective mode of being and phase of becoming, one may avoid the omission of considering objectivizing process in the subjectivist position. A pragmatic phenomenological perspective in combining Peirce and Heidegger is therefore to describe behaviors in particular contexts apropos of their habitual references that would never be totally existent, thus demanding a historical review to find patterns, and to focus on the significances emerging from the interrelations between an individual and surrounding entities.

2.3 The Academic Quest for the Origin of Sherpa

From a commonsense view, the question, "who are Sherpa?" could have easily turned into a question of origin in terms of either lineage or autochthony. That is, the question of identity veers to a question of the past: a certain continuity over time is assumed.[14] A modern form of such a quest for origin may be found in Harka Gurung's appraisal of a "false claim" of being Sherpa:

[14] The genealogy of this question of origin demands a review. In terms of the *function* of knowing the past, at first, I assent to Jean Pouillon's threefold framing of tradition, namely social, historical and perceptual, as he says that "there is something arbitrary about any tradition because it is social, and something contingent because it is historical. However, tradition's effectiveness and reality stem from the feeling that it is natural and self-evident for those on whom it is exerted" (Pouillon 1997:19). But he does not discuss the way in which the structure of feeling has shaped in such a way, perhaps because his constructivist framing resists an inspection of perceptual phenomena. In turn, the questions of origin have brought a series of negation of our assumptions on the past, and by this way they have pressed us to naturally take such a perceptive attitude toward historical facts. The constructivist conception of the past would inevitably become paradoxical. Indeed, a fairly pragmatic dealing with the past has been done in South Asian studies. The German linguist, Johannes Schmidt (1843-1901), firstly noted (1889) that ethnic groupings do not coincide with linguistic groups that are observable in South Asia. Anthropological scholars in this area have long been aware that the theory that "only one single primitive race in India in the very early days is utterly untenable" (Hermanns 1954:xii). After him, Fr. Matthias Hermanns noted complications among the Southern Himalayan tribes, a set of complications he called "Mongoloid Problems," and said "within the same group of people speaking the same language, Mongoloid and non-Mongoloid elements present." Put differently, "We have … peoples who are facially non-Mongoloid but who belong linguistically to the Tibeto-Chinese family of languages" (Hermanns 1954:119). It is worthy to read his explanation of the interplay: "The fact that quondam nomad now lives in houses, sleeps on beds and has a totally different occupation also has its effect on the body. All these deviations and transformations gradually effect the physical habits, the phenotype. … [A] physical transformation takes place which after a fairly long period of time can cause racial differences" (Hermanns 1954:121). This might sound like submitting to the Lamarckian theory of evolution that animals change under environmental pressure; but it is not. He simply could not have assumed any entity, be it individual, family line, subspecies or whatever. Trying to make a classification for the group of people called "Rong" of the mountain tribes of Sikkim in northeastern India, he writes, "From an anthropological standpoint we would like to draw a line of difference between the hunters and the farmers, thus forming two typical groups. The hunters with their hunting religion, sociology and economy represent the tall Rong type and are characterised by the larger physical build, the long small face, the open eye and the long small high nose. The farmers, on the other hand constitute the second group with shorter physiques, broad faces, broad nose, Mongolian eyefold, and prominent cheek bones" (Hermanns 1954:106). In short, his method of classification is purely pragmatic, albeit in a narrow sense, not assuming any trait to be superior to others. The question is, therefore, how we may apply such a pragmatic classification to the knowledge production

> Some members of other groups like the Bhotia and Tamang also now claim to be Sherpa. This is evident from the 1991 census data which reports 110,358 Sherpas as against only 12,463 Bhotias. Of the total reported as Sherpa, only 20,241, or 16.5 percent, are in Solu-Khumbu, the home district. The majority, particularly from districts to the west, are new claimants to the Sherpa identity because of the prestige and income associated with mountain tourism. (Salter and Gurung 1999:23).[15]

According to David Gellner (2008), this viewpoint is referred to as the *primordial position* as opposed to the *modernist position*. The primordial position, the ethnicity branch of the objectivist position, regards ethnic identity as a more or less universal aspect of social identity. In contrast, the modernist position, sharing the emphasis on social and historical processes with the subjectivist position, considers ethnicity and nationalism to be distinctively modern phenomena. I will attempt to reconcile the two conflicting positions. The modernist position would criticize that H. Gurung's primordialist claim disregards underlying ethnic politics by granting those in Solu-Khumbu as authentic. It may also be attacked for not considering the observer's social, political, and epistemological standpoint.

process of the modern Sherpa.

[15] The Sherpa population has grown to 154,622 in 2001 as surveyed by Central Bureau of Statistics in Nepal. This number accounts for 0.7 percent of the total population of Nepal, 22,736,934 (Gurung 2008:62). Categorization of Nepali demographics is complicated due to several reasons, and has been defined variously in accordance with purposes. The two major groupings in its population census in 2001 applied by the Central Bureau of Statistics of the Government of Nepal accord with caste/ethnicity and native language. The former applies four sub-categories: caste, Dalit caste, ethnic, and others. 103 groups are identified in this classification system. Five sub-categories are employed in the latter: Indo-Aryan, Tibeto-Burman, Munda, Dravidian, and Sino-Tibetan. 93 groups are identified in this classification system. The number of people who speak Sherpa as their native language is 129,771 according to the survey in 2001 (Gurung 2008).

Anthropologists have advocated differing views in regard to the observer's position. In his description of a group of Gurungs' movement towards a collective ethnic revival, Alan Macfarlane (2008) favors a "co-operative venture with the people themselves" (Gellner 2008:22). In a more reflexive tone, Sahlins contends that anthropologists who take the view of the contrast between a powerful world system and people's cultural incoherence merely "mimic on an academic plane the same imperialism they would despise" (Sahlins 2000:478). Gellner (2008: fn.18) calls attention to Sahlins's omission: regardless of whether the anthropologist sides with the activists, the opponents, or somewhere in between, the anthropologists' positioning is inevitable. Instead, he focuses on how groundless such activists' claims could be and argues that anthropologists "have a particular duty to document the *lack of fit* between what activists say and the feelings and perceptions of those on whose behalf the activists claim to speak" (Gellner 2008:22-3).

I find one missing dimension across this theoretical debate on ethnicity and ethnic politics: epistemology. It is a more basic framework in which anthropologists may consider simultaneously the theoretical discussions and their positioning within the discussions. The framework may seek to recognize epistemological discrepancy that the discourses of local categorizations may reveal and therefore to affirm an epistemological distance between anthropologists' language and the local perception. This is not to say that, thanks to the distance, anthropological writings might avoid to influence politics on the ground. Rather, the influence is poorly understood, and little attention was paid to the extent to which academic and local discourses would epistemologically intersect with one

another. Thus, my inquiry is to seek a Sherpa epistemology, or manner of objectivizing, which is not necessarily identical with the observer's one.

The key is to go beyond the image-reality dualism embedded in both primordialist and modernist positions. Instead, ideology constitutes reality. The dualism is sophisticated by Lévi-Strauss, who noted that "the historian and the agent of history choose, sever and carve them up, for a truly total history would confront them with chaos" (1966:257). Following this line, one of the early scholars on the Sherpa, Michael Oppitz (1974:241) argued that *the* answer "only wait[s] to be discovered." "Sherpa," a word now dissected as "Shar" (east), and "pa" (people), has been interpreted as "an easterner" or "eastern people."[16] Oppitz and his colleagues conducted pioneering research (Oppitz 1968; 1974) with their discovery in Solu of some ancient documents that include esoteric descriptions on the origin and the early history of the people. His analysis and conversation with a few "learned people" concluded with hypotheses that soon became widely accepted as the genuine history of the Sherpa. The history is summarized thus: a very small number of people moved from far eastern Tibet to Central Tibet due to the development of politico-religious conflicts. Decades later, perhaps because of the Muslim invasion into Tibet in 1531-33, they chose to move again toward the south before settling down at Khumbu, a place not yet inhabited, and further south in Solu. The first immigrants were four families and thus became four "proto-clans," two of whom settled down each in the east and the west of Khumbu, and the other two further

[16] The name "Sherpa" is also used outside the southern slope of the Himalayas for a group of people in Sichuan District of China, in eastern Tibet, who call themselves Amdo Sherpa (Nagano 1980).

south. From the originary clansmen, the current twenty "pure" clans have generated, in opposition to the minor "pseudo-clans" as well as recent immigrants called "Khamba."

Oppitz has endorsed Lévi-Strauss's (1966) division between historical and mythological thinkings, where the former is more concrete and associated and the latter is more abstract and dissociated.[17] He legitimated the explication of the "learned people" because they were "quite definite about which parts of an account are to be taken as serious historical report and which ones are mythological" (Oppitz 1974:238).

Oppitz's approach is problematic in both primordialist and modernist positions. From the modernist point of view, the status of the "learned people"—village lamas—is deemed to be contested in one way or another. From the primordialist point of view, a number of the details do not coincide with observations from other sources. From the beginning, it is nothing but Lévi-Strauss's historicist eurocentrism which has supplied the ground on which history and mythology would divorce one another. The four-family migration plot highly parallels to one of the widespread and recurring Tibetan cosmological symbolisms, namely, "square-based system" (Stein 1972). Stein has emphasized the significance of the concept in the nation-building myth of Tibet during the period of the rising of its empire. Interestingly, he notes "four tribes which later became great noble families" of the four cardinal directions, and the east one among the

[17] In the article, "History and Dialectic" (*The Savage Mind*, 1966 [1962]), Lévi-Strauss criticizes Sartre privileging diachrony over synchrony, history over anthropology. Sartre has developed his later thought in *Critique de la Raison Dialectique* (vol. 1, 1960) and argued for Communism with a main idea that society contextualizes a human freedom in his reasoning, namely historical consciousness which posits a contrast between the primitive and the civilized. Lévi-Strauss disagreed with this and claimed, "The savage mind is logical in the same sense and the same fashion as ours, though as our own is only when it is applied to knowledge of a universe in which it recognizes physical and semantic properties simultaneously" (Lévi-Strauss 1966:268).

four families was called "Shüpu" (Stein 1972:39), literally people of the east.[18] Considering this, Oppitz's version of Sherpa origin, where four families settled each in villages of the four cardinal directions in Khumbu, apparently sounds "mythological." Oppitz's version of history embodies the historian's own way of understanding of the past events.

Macdonald (1980) also investigated the same topic. He collected oral traditions among the residents of Solu. His version of the origin of the Sherpa qualitatively differs from the Oppitz's. According to him, over four hundred years ago, some Tibetans began to migrate southward with two representative lamas whose religious lineage stemmed back to Kham in eastern Tibet. There occurred continuous micro-political relationships over the governance of the region as well as various migratory movements between the north and the south of Solukhumbu. In that early period, a small number of lamas played a central role, which led to disputes in terms of sacred power.

Macdonald argues that this "re-discovery" is, with the Geertzian "aura of factuality" (Geertz 1973c:90), composed of "widely accepted social facts" which would

[18] Stein points out the recurrence of the fourfold system in Tibetan kingdom myth as well as in a variety of writings found throughout the country. According to his description, the first Tibetan king was established at the center, surrounded by temples at the four corners; Tibet is surrounded to the east by China, to the south by India, to the west by Persia, Byzantium, or "Rum," and to the north by the Turks, the Uighurs, or "Phrom" (Rome); to the east lay the land of divination and calculation, to the south that of religion, to the west that of wealth, jewels and trade, and to the north that of horses, weapons and war; the first king conquered four tribes which later became great noble families and absorbed into the Tibetan army (Shüpu, Tshepong, Belnön, and Nanam); the same fourfold classification was "used over and over again" (Stein 1972:37-44). It is also worthy of note that among most groups of Rai (a lowland Mongoloid stock in Eastern Nepal) a story of four original brothers is found, though their names usually differ (Gaenszle 2012:39). Further, it has been known that in the first recorded history of Nepal, the Kirati period (800 BCE-300 CE), the fourteenth Kirata king Sthunko had four stupas built around Patan (the ancient city south to Kathmandu) in the four cardinal directions.

tell of the way through which Sherpas directly envisage their own distant past. In other words, the oral history serves for the contemporary generations' aspirations and politics rather than factually proving the distant past. From the Sherpa lama's point of view, moreover, the Nepali Buddhism scholar Jamyang Wangmo (2005:22-23) suggested: 1) the specific place of eastern Tibet from which the ancestors came is different from that which was suggested by Oppitz; 2) the migration took place not only once but serially; 3) the serial migration's cause, time periods, and routes are also different with various opinions; and 4) the migration might have involved religious reasons in the choice of destination. The last point has been augmented by Geoff Childs, who noted, "migration auspices have influenced trans-Himalayan migrations and shaped the ways communities … have formed" (Childs 2012:25). All in all, what one may reasonably postulate about the origin and ancient history of the Sherpa is limited to the following: 1) no doubt has been expressed about Sherpa's initial migration from Tibet in the sixteenth century, and 2) no agreement was made over the details of the early migration including the number of people, periods of time, key figures, and social and religious forces, among others. Any further fixation of the measure of certainty in these statements will require a certain set of premises based upon a particular epistemology.

2.3.1 The Origin of Sherpas in Walung

One needs to be cautious about epistemological discrepancy when attempting to investigate the origin and early history of the inhabitants of upper Walung. A few anthropological researchers have conducted studies in the regions nearby. Hildegard

Diemberger (1997) worked with the people called "Khumbo" in Seduwa, a village next to Walung. She documents two periods of Sherpa migratory waves from Khumbu to Seduwa. The first was said to take place soon after the first Sherpa ancestral migration into Khumbu and the second about the year 1825.[19] This tracking was conducted mainly based on religious documents found and investigated in the area. Like the Oppitz's case, Diemberger's study was conducted using an alleged distinction between the historical and the mythological data without questioning the subjectivity of the original writers and the lamas. Also, on account of features of their customs and physiological appearances, she suggests that Khumbo are descendants of Khumbu Sherpa, intermingling provincial cultures while maintaining the pure inheritance of "proto-clans." However, Rohit Kumar Nepali contends differently: "In Yaphu and Makalu VDCs [i.e. Walung and Seduwa] live the descendants of Sherpa migrants who intermarried with people of Tibetan origin who had entered Nepal at some other period" (R. Nepali 2008:240).

In Walung, no temple exists, nor have any historical documents been found. The villagers told me variously about their origin: "One thousand years ago, one Sherpa or two migrated from Solukhumbu"; "Two thousand years ago, the first Walung Sherpa migrated from Tibet"; "At the outset, one man migrated from Solu, another from Yaphu";

[19] In Darjeeling of 1947, Sherpa population was counted as 6,929 (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1984:64). The Nepali migration to Darjeeling in the period from the late nineteenth century to 1980s is notable and was mainly due to the British ethnic policy in their colonial programs including the recruitment of Gurkhas (a generic term employed for the Nepali soldiers in the British colonial army; the practice of this recruitment followed the Anglo-Nepal War, 1814-1816) and the development of the eastern Himalayan foothills for tea planting. The British officials in the district then sought the industrious Nepalis who joined the movement for "democratization against the feudal anachronism" (Sinha 2003:39). In the 1980s, Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf notes "this drift to Darjeeling has stopped, for Kathmandu offers more attractive prospects to the Sherpas seeking a life-style different from that in their home villages" (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1984:4).

"nobody knows where they came from"; and so on. It seemed surprising to me that villagers appear rather indifferent to when and from where their ancestors migrated, considering the colonization of the land must not have exceeded four or five generations given the limited degree of kin and affinal differentiation in the region.

Sherpas in upper Walung can be traced through the line of descent to Solukhumbu Sherpas. Due to the economic and political impact from the British colonial project over the Himalayas, there was an "eastward movement of the Sherpas" in the nineteenth century (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1984:3). It would take around nine days to walk from Walung to Solu today; however, at least around fifty years ago, it was perhaps six to seven days, based on one of the earliest maps depicting the area (Bordet 1958) which details the earlier short-cut mountainous paths that are no longer in use today. The configuration looks quite different from those used by the current inhabitants, certainly due to the non-existence of firm bridges over the swirling Arun River.[20] This reconstruction of the past supports the oral tradition in which Sherpas in Walung imagine their origin from Solukhumbu—between the two regions little interregional interactions occur today—and not from the closer regions of Pathibhara and Hatiya VDCs in the same district where Bhote, culturally akin to Sherpa, have formed communities up to the border with China to the north.

[20] In the 1950s, a flimsy rope bridge was hung across the river near Num mainly for the sake of trade with Tibet, over which some villagers were scared to cross (Hillary and Lowe 1956:27; Bowman, Dyhrenfurth and Hagen 1963:13). My informants also recollected the rope bridge. An iron suspension bridge across the river between Walung and Num, as of today, was constructed in 1999.

Lineage and ethnicity are not parallel notions. Lineage may be traced across the label of ethnic categories. This does not mean that ethnicity is purely a social creation whereas lineage reflects biological descent. For example, since several members of the Walung Sherpa community keep a few of Bhote's lineage names, one might suggest that a genealogy of Walung Sherpa, if matrilineal and not patrimonial, can be traced to the Khumbo of Seduwa or Tibetans of Tingri (the district in China, north of Sankhuwasabha) rather than the inhabitants of Solu and Khumbu. Should this alternative genealogy be plausible, migration might be, as Robbins Burling notes, "best seen as a *metaphor* by which both the indigenous people and outside visitors have tried to understand the history and distribution of peoples" (2012:61; italics mine). Nevertheless, ethnicity, as well as migration, is not a mere "story." Not only has no Walung Sherpa imagined their origin in such a way, but most customs and characteristics of their patterns of living are akin to those of Sherpas to the west—Solukhumbu. The category of "Sherpa" has existed beyond what an outside observer or a Sherpa may imagine it to be; though there are a certain amount of variation, the name "Sherpa" may be, as it has been, the best umbrella term enclosing all the diversity. The category of ethnicity is not detached from the "reality"; this constructivist perspective only replicates the image-reality dualism typical of the eurocentric thinking. Instead, local discourses of migration and ethnicity may be best understood as part of all facts of their identity, a conglomeration of history and social relations. The past does not exist by virtue of its functional efficacy toward individual subjectivity (e.g. verbal recollections, biblical documents, and field notes) so as to abide metaphorically, but only appears as a function for those who seek to find it.

As a pragmatic phenomenological inquiry, questioning the origin of a group of people is to investigate more than oral traditions and actual migratory events. The project seeks to identify a pattern from their conjunctions and incongruities: it examines epistemic practices that make out one's own history and society.

2.4 Cosmological Orders through Village Rituals

This section investigates three village rituals, not because I wish to identify their "authentic" forms or to decode the internal logic of their symbolisms, but because I hope to restore their "practical necessity" (Bourdieu 1977:114) at the nexus between the rituals' functions and means they use to attain them. In doing so, I aim to identify an ongoing, active pattern within Sherpa cosmology's ordering and reordering processes. The rituals in question are *dhaaja puja* (household blessing ritual), *milam* (individual blessing), and *pan chauli puja* (family blessing ritual).

Before the arrival of the festive period of *losar* (S., T., or *lhosar*, Tibetan New Year festival, usually in February), Sherpas of Walung conduct various ritual ceremonies during the period of the three months, "*mangshir*, *pus*, and *maagh*" in the Nepali Bikram Samvat calendar, as they usually refer to the off-seasonal months of winter.[21] Some

[21] The three months refer to the period from about mid-November to mid-February. The Bikram Samvat calendar is the official calendar in Nepal. For example, the dhaaja puja as I describe below for the Ang Temba lama's household was conducted in December 12, 2012, which is Mangshir 27, 2069 in BS. While the Bikram calendar is widely used in Nepal, the Tibetan calendar *lo-tho* is sometimes referred to within Nepal for ritual purposes. The Gregorian calendar has increasingly been used especially in tourism sectors. The practices of referencing climatic seasons vary. In the education sector, a year is divided into six seasons: *Basanta* (spring; April-May), *Grishma* (summer; June-July), *Barshaa* (monsoon; late June-mid September), *Sharad* (autumn; September-November), *Hinud* (fall-winter; December-January), and *Sisir* (winter; February-March). The other forms include systems that divide a year by four seasons (winter, spring, summer, and fall, four seasons (winter, pre-monsoon, monsoon, and post-monsoon), and two

rituals are unable to prefix when to conduct, such as funerals (*gyowa*) and newborn-baby naming ceremonies (*aang-aa minechang*). Those adjustable rituals, such as marriage, dhaaja puja, and pan chauli puja, are conducted exclusively within this period of a year. This temporal concentration of rituals during the winter is highly exceptional, as it is not reported across Nepal. During this period, members of the Walung Sherpa community would gather and enjoy themselves at around three to five ceremonies each month. They reason, every winter is favored by fine weather, little work needs to be done, and herds of cows and sheep are stocked near the village.

2.4.1 Dhaaja Puja

Dhaaja puja embodies a basic symbolism that is widespread over Asia. Anthropological interpretations of this kind of rituals documented across South Asia have adhered to two different approaches, namely, Malinowskian functionalist symbolism and Durkheminian-Maussian total social fact. In accordance with the former, dhaaja puja, when performed, functions to import cosmic order to the "chaotic" universe (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1945; Tucci 1949).[22] On the other hand, a better appreciation has been

seasons (dry and wet seasons). These climatic seasonal distinctions are rarely used in everyday contexts in Nepal. Sherpas in Walung normally indicate two consecutive months to refer to particular seaons.

[22] Von Fürer-Haimendorf (1945) credits the Russian Roerich family (Nicholas Roerich, the founder of the Himalayan Research Institute, and his son George de Roerich) with the first observation of symbolic importance of megalithic culture in Tibet. The Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci, formularizing its cosmic symbolism (Tucci 1949), illustrates a case of Tibetan king's funeral how such a practice would create a cosmic order from a chaotic universe: "The pillar as soon as it is placed in a spot, testifies to a definite possession of the soil upon which it is planted: the king identifies himself with the Law and then with a visible symbol of it, viz. the pillar: a new cosmos is built, the cosmos of the Law, the magic centre of which is that very pillar symbolizing the king himself. In that way the chaotic forces moving underneath the soil, the world of the *sa bdag* and *klu*, the waters expressing the primeval chaos and the devil are subdued; a new order is so established and the way to heaven is opened; the pillar is in fact at the same time the way

increasingly given to the (Durkheminian-Maussian) sociological approach to religious rituals, considering the high degree of group interaction across the Himalayan chain (e.g. Buffetrille and Diemberger 2002). Analyzing dhaaja puja, I attempt to merge insights taken from both approaches.

The puja may be illustrated thus (Figure 2-6). It is a ritual that needs to be observed for each house each year. Participants set upright a *chotar* (*chorten* in KS.), or a long wood pole, at the center of the yard and replace *lungda*—colorful prayer buntings on which Tibetan figures of sutra are written—on and around the roof of the house with a new one. Ordinarily, one lama or two conduct the rite, read, and recite sutra in order to symbolically endow sacred forces to the new chotar and lungda. They are assisted by one or more *lhaben*s (shamanic priest, ordinarily an old male who is able to recite some sutra and who conducts sacrificial rites which lamas do not).[23] A "tantric" element, referring

leading to heaven, it is the *axis mundi* perforating the planes of existence; it is therefore the royal counterpart of the work undertaken by Padmasambhava and his Indian companions, when they were called into Tibet to subdue the indigenous demons who were the causes of deseases [*sic*], epidemics and troubles of all kinds; Padmasambhava turned them into Guardians of the Law and custodians of the temples. A revolution of planes was then realized, and it was testified by the erection of the *rdo riṅ*" (Tucci 1950:34). This practice to which Tucci referred as *rdo-riṅ* as generally called by Tibetans is widely applied by numerous groups of people in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition in Nepal including most Sherpa and many Bhotia groups for individual houses as described in the case of dhaaja puja of Walung. Further, describing a Tibetan king's funeral, Tucci notes the relationship of ritual participation and its expected merit: "The ceremony of consecration (rab gnas) was therefore needed and on that occasion all people gathered, because the efficacy of the magic rite might spread upon them and they on the other hand transferred their energies to the soil. In this way bde skyid, happiness, was ensured to the country" (Tucci 1950:35).

[23] No orthodox Buddhist in the tradition would allow animal sacrifice or blood offering, as it has been strictly banned in mainland Tibet and Khumbu area in particular, and so *torma* (*gtor-ma* in T.), or sacrificial cake, made from dough is widely used as a symbolic substitute (Beer 2003). The lama/lhaben duality, and thus the torma/sacrifice dual practice, not observable among Solukhumbu Sherpas, can indicate a significant measure for the religiosity of the area from a practical perspective on Tibetan Buddhism. While in Seduwa and Yaphu the same role with the same name is observable (in Seduwa, the name was documented as "lhaven" by Diemberger 1997), it is called "loben" in Hatiya, Kimathanka, and Chepuwa VDCs, the villages of Lhomi and Kar Bhote of the northern end of Sankhuwasabha district (Bista



Figure 2-6. Dhaaja puja. In a later stage of dhaaja puja, Sherpas are hanging a new bundle of lungda on and around the respective house in Nishar, Walung, northeastern Nepal, on December 12, 2012. Photo by the author.

2004:200).

to the use of esoteric, antinomian ritualisms including sex and consumption of alcohol and prohibited meat, is visible when a large amount of *chhang* (S. millet beer) is prepared at the foot of the pole, sanctified by the lama and consumed by participants. The participants would include a dozen or two guests from neighborhoods and from nearby hamlets; I discuss social significances of chhang consumption in following chapters (§6.2, §6.5, §7.3). Family members of the household are specially treated and, together with the house (*khangba*), are blessed by the lama. The puja is highlighted by the family making several turns around the pole in the clockwise direction.

Dhaaja puja appears highly practical—oriented to an achievement of the purpose rather than the continuation of the form.[24] Though variations exist elsewhere, the puja described herein is practiced only by the members of the Walung Sherpa community. In Kathmandu, for example, a successful Walung Sherpa, Mingma, conducted a dhaaja puja for his newly built house. A number of lamas were summoned from a Sherpa *gompa* (S., T. temple) near Boudhanath, conducting a puja by reciting sutra and playing religious instruments in a separate room, whereas family members and guests enjoyed fellowship at the yard, perfunctorily sipping cups of non-sanctified chhang. There was no circumambulation around the pole nor lama's blessing for the family members. Most Walung Sherpas in Kathmandu housed themselves in rented rooms, so that no one except Mingma, during the research period, conducted dhaaja puja. Another example is

[24] As long as dhaaja puja entails a construction of chotar and decoration with lungda, this practice may be understood as for gaining *sonam* (T.; *pei*, KS.), or merit. Sherpa religious specialists in Khumbu, according to Fürer-Haimendorf (1964: Ch.8), believe that every act of virtue (*gewa*, KS.) adds to an individual's store of sonam, whereas every morally negative action or sin (*digba*, KS.) decreases this stock. Von Fürer-Haimendorf notes, "The construction of *mani*-walls and *chörten*, even more than their circumambulation, is a source of great merit for those commissioning the work" (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964:274).

Mingma's younger brother, Nawang. He did not conduct a dhaaja puja for his newly built house in Khandbari, the municipal capital of the Sankhuwasabha district. Thus, it has to be lived without decorations of lungda and chotar. The house was not a house in its fullest sense, as it was supplemental for lodging his two kids attending private schools in the town. His main house was still in the upper Walung, for which dhaaja puja was yearly performed. Mingma's another brother, Pasang Phurba, was more than happy and supportive when his wealthy Hindu householder observed a puja in an orthodox Hindu fashion for the house in Kathmandu including his rented rooms and kitchen. Therefore, in the functionalist frame of reference, the aim of dhaaja puja seems clear to the Sherpa's mind. It is not confined to the form of the puja, including its legitimate symbolism like the sanctification of chhang, but directed toward the merit expected from it, while keeping the practical, social, and cosmological status of household at the center of the ritual.

2.4.2 Pan Chauli Puja

Pan chauli puja aims to attain a special blessing for a family. The puja involves a trip to the bank of the Arun River (*Chyu Arun* in Sherpa), thus sometimes called *chyu arun puja*. It is an enlarged version of the "small" sized puja called *milam* (WS.; *molom* in KS.; *molam* in Tm.; Macdonald 1975). Milam refers to a rite involving a specialist's blessing prayer for an individual or two, intending to generate fortune or cure illness. The Sherpas normally conduct this ritual when they depart from the village to the outer world for a relatively long period of time. Indeed, periodic migratory lifestyles are recurrent and

customary among many Sherpa men for diverse objectives including traditional enterprises, such as pastoralism, trade, and pilgrimage involving weeks of tramp, and relatively new businesses such as joining mountaineering expeditions and working in other countries.

A milam took place one early morning of January in 2013 for twenty-nine-year-old Purba near his house in Nishar. For the milam, a location was chosen on a rock, a good viewpoint. The given reason for this choice is the proximity to the Arun River, which roars all the time throughout the valley, though out of sight. The river is said to flow to *Yembu* (WS.; *Yambu*, T.), or Kathmandu.[25] In fact, it flows to the far eastern Indus-Gangetic Plain and Indian Ocean. Purba's father, eighty-year-old Lhakpa, led the ritual, while the son sat in front of the simple altar. Present at the ritual were Purba's five-year-old son Dawa as an assistant and I as an onlooker. A lump of smoking charcoal, a sacrificial hen, and other ritual objects were prepared. The puja came about in a simple and quick manner: Lhakpa prayed, fatally cut the hen's neck, spattered the blood on the offerings, and checked inside of a sacred egg whether or not the yolk was crushed—if not, it signals good luck. In milam, the expected merit is procurable via a specific set-up of territory by cosmologically placing the village in relation to the Arun River and Kathmandu. The ritual reveals an elemental pattern of Sherpas' perception that takes into account time, place, and virtue.

[25] Newar, the long-time inhabitants of Kathmandu valley, has their name for the Kathmandu region "Yeṃ." The name, "Kathmandu," is derived from the Sanskrit name, "Kāṣṭhamaṇḍapa," which is attested from at least the twelfth century (Snellgrove 1987:367).



Figure 2-7. Pan Chauli Puja at the edge of the Arun River on January 15, 2013. Photo by the author.

An example of pan chauli puja shows how this pattern may pertain to creation and manipulation of social identity. The puja took place a few days later (Figure 2-7). Similar to milam, the main purpose of pan chauli puja was to wish for good fortune during the year at Kathmandu, now for twenty-six-year-old Dawa Sangge and his family, including his father, wife, and son. Conducted at the bank of the Arun River, the puja required taking a two-day journey outside the Sherpa village (i.e. the lower Walung). It was joined by about forty Sherpas and about sixty non-Sherpa inhabitants in the area. For the whole ritual trip Dawa Sangge spent about two lakh rupees ($2,500), a great expenditure by

local standards. Two lamas, cousins, and neighbors willingly joined the trip to conduct, assist, and enjoy themselves at the ritual gathering.

After spending the night on a paddy field near the river, the main rite was performed on the following morning. Firstly, the lamas prayed and recited sutra to the family at the altar made on the very edge of the river. Second, a Tamang specialist (of the lower Walung) cut the heads of the seven sacrificial animals in sequence from the smallest chick to the biggest buffalo. The serial beheading was climaxed by the last animal being killed by a single chop with a three-foot-long sword accompanied by a loud gunfire. Lastly, a candle-lit plate with rice was placed to float away on the river. It is said that if the plate floats until out of sight, it signals good luck. After all the main formalities were done, during the rest of the day people jovially danced, ate, chatted, played cards and so on. About thirty women bartered the leftover meats for food—fruit or wine—or sometimes cash. A few Sherpa participants told me that the puja was "very good" (*lhemu*). In order to make the puja "good," it must be "big" (*tsombu*, WS.). For this, the Sherpas paid a considerable amount in labor and expenses. The more people who join and enjoy themselves, the better religious merits to be expected. Mathew Kapstein (2014) summarizes the Tibetan religious life as a sort of chain relation: material base, community's prosperity, religious achievement, and cooperation of local spirits are all in tandem with one another.

2.4.3 Cosmological Territorial Order: Focus

The rituals described above clarify, reemphasize, and solidify Sherpa *cosmological order* in two dimensions. One is a territorial order by which the geographical center is set up and comes to embody the cosmic centrality enacted by the manifested inward/outward opposition. The other is a temporal order by which rituals would announce significant points of temporal reference based on which Sherpas perceive past experiences and future events

The most significant part of the pan chauli puja was the sacred plate floating precariously over the swirling river, as the expected merit was significantly dependent on its performance. From the religiously symbolic perspective, the spiritual *focus* given to the plate and the river overwhelms and renders inoperative all otherwise significant ethnic differences among the people present. Though the ritual was conducted deliberately within an orthodox (Walung) Sherpa fashion, their generous service to the local non-Sherpa participants, for instance, requires explanations beyond the stereotypical Sherpa "tradition of hospitality" (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1984:68). The guests turned into part of a single community with the Sherpas in reference to the plate floating down. Regardless of what they had in their minds, Sherpas viewed the crowd as "ritual participants" to render the ritual big. For this formation of Walung community, what matters is not the participants' motives, values, or images of the ritual, but their presence.

No aspect of the ritual symbolism can be viewed as arbitrarily made. The symbolism of the Arun River is worthy of noting. Walung is considered higher in elevation than Kathmandu and further away than foreign countries, as the Sherpas refer to

foreign countries as far lower (*ma muru*), Kathmandu low (*muru*), the upper Walung high (*yuru*), and *phul* (high hills for summer pasture) far higher (*ya yuru*). This characteristic perception of faraway places in terms of respective altitude plays a significant role in Sherpa experiences in Himalayan mountaineering; here suffice it to say that all significant locations in the Sherpa world are laid out by imposing the focus upon the Sherpaland.

Moreover, if one considers "the surprising development of the Arun River system [compared to other rivers of Himalaya] … characterized by extensive valley shoulders in the gorge" (Hagen 1963:74-78), the symbolisms of the two pujas—milam and pan chauli puja—may not be understood without considering the river as both physical and psychological boundary of the upper Walung Sherpa identity. The geographical/psychological pair can no more be sharply divided than the territoriality/ethnicity pair. Thus, Sherpas in upper Walung regard those in lower Walung as "hamro manche" (N. our people) regardless of their ethnicity.[26]

Amid this formation of the community of Walung, territory emerges beyond the locale. The new territoriality attains to a cosmology that is simultaneously autochthonous and global as it strategically incorporates Kathmandu as Walung's significant

[26] Although I analyze here the symbolism of the Arun River levelly incorporating all members of Walung without regard to their ethnic diversity, Sherpa symbolism of the river and sense of landscape are drastically different from those of other lowlanders. Arun River separates Walung from Num to the southeast. The river system, or Isuwa Khola (N.), flows from the northeastern direction to the Arun River and separate Walung from Seduwa to the north. Apsuwa (or Choyang) Khola (N.), separates Walung from Yaphu to the south. Sherpas of Walung, however, call the three courses (Arun River, Isuawa Khola, and Apsuwa Khola) of river "Chyu Arun" altogether. They are obviously aware of their different directions and sometimes refer to each tributary as its distinctive Sherpa name. This may mean that they perceive Walung as if it floats over, severed solely by, Chyu Arun.

counterpart. The ritual enacts territoriality by providing for the Walung Sherpas the cosmological *focus*, instead of locus.

I suggest that the concept of territorial focus brings new insights regarding ethnicity in three respects. First, the conception attempts to polish Evans-Pritchard's structural distance briefly mentioned above. While his concept postulates a distinction between geographic and social distances, the territorial focus may consider significance without arbitrarily distinguishing physical distributions from their human understanding. Instead, it seeks a connection between the two. Secondly, the conception attempts to resist the emphasis on actuality stressed by Radcliffe-Brown's notion of social structure, defined as a "network of *actually* existing relations" (Radcliffe-Brown 1940b:2; italics mine). Along the same line, Appadurai suggests the concept of locality, which provides, in my view, a detailed version of Radcliffe-Brownian social relations: "locality is always emergent from the practices of local subjects in specific neighborhoods" (Appadurai 1996:199). In his concept, as well as in Radcliffe-Brown's privilege of actuality, production of locality, ambient or practical, is to occur always at a conscious level and in sanctioned way and yet overlooks the totality of potentialities that might have been actualized in other ways. For example, the expected merit at the ritual is nonlocal and atemporal—not actualized in the Radcliffe-Brownian sense—but is nevertheless real and significant so as to bring the ritual into being. Lastly, the conception modifies Edmund Leach's concept of *boundary*, which is defined as "artificial interruptions to what is naturally continuous" (Leach 1976:34). In his artificial/natural distinction are two problems: For one, the territoriality-making I have described is not entirely man-made.

For example, although the performance of the rite to obtain merits would mainly be determined by the choices and efforts of the participants, one may not be certain where all desires and inspirations originate from. For another, even an omniscient person will never become aware whether there exists such a "naturally continuous" world at all. For example, a Sherpa would never experience Kathmandu in its "natural" state during his observance of a puja in the village for his forthcoming life in the capital.

2.4.4 Cosmological Temporal Order: Orientation

Parallel to the focus enforcing on the cosmological territorial order is *orientation* on the temporal order. I bring insight from Heidegger's later thought which resists the common notion of time as a condition linearly expanding.[27] The "later" Heidegger endeavored to resist the Aristotelian view of time, which posits, according to him, that time is "something counted in connection with motion that is encountered in the horizon of the earlier and later (motion encountered with regard to the before and after)" (Heidegger 1988:390). This notion is merely circular and hermeneutic: according to Heidegger, both the "earlier and later" and the "before and after" (his dual translation of Aristotle's *proteron kai husteron* or prior and posterior) depend on the original temporality in the phenomena of expecting and retaining necessary for spatial positioning

[27] In *Being and Time*—which is considered to have summed up the "early" Heidegger's thoughts—he noted, "[T]ime needs to be explicated primordially as the *horizon* for the understanding of Being" (Heidegger 2008:39; italics mine). Not long after the publication of this masterpiece, this concept of time was dismissed by himself. In a lecture, "Time and Being," he argued, "Being is not a thing, thus nothing temporal … Being and time determine each other reciprocally, but in such a manner that neither can the former—Being—be addressed as something temporal nor can the latter—time—be addressed as a being" (Heidegger 1972:3). That is to say, "neither Being nor time *is*" (Stambaugh 1972:27).

(Protevi 1994:164). Heidegger argues for a view of time as "number—as opposed to mere sequences of geometrical arbitrary countable points" in the Aristotelian linear notion of time (Hemming 2002:98). Any number can be meaningful on the ground that any other number is meaningful. Laurence Hemming explicates this, saying,

> The no-longer and not-yet which characterize each now are not added to the now; they belong to the now as part of its very content. It is this which allows the now to have within itself the '*character of a transition*.' The now is therefore in no sense a limit." (Hemming 2002:99)

By conceiving time as non-chaotic limitless temporality, an event can be endowed with a certain temporal dimension as being oriented to the now.

An illustration of what is ordinarily called puja in Himalayan mountaineering contexts may help understand the orientation of the temporal order. Every mountaineering expedition in the Himalaya, involving Sherpa mountaineers, nowadays conducts a puja at Base Camp before the team begins climbing the aimed mountain. The format and procedure of the rite are similar to those of dhaaja puja. Chotar is erected at the stone altar at the center of Base Camp, bundles of lungda are hung over the camp. One or two lamas pray and recite sutra. All participants ritually share alcoholic beverage and snacks as the puja concludes. The puja must be conducted before the inception of climbing, typically after the completion of setting up Base Camp. If the situation does not allow—for example, no lama is available—the expedition may want to observe a puja on the way to the mountain or even before departing Kathmandu.[28] The ritual identifies one

[28] The expedition puja ritual outstandingly exhibits the global, transnational, and cosmopolitan aspects of

and single expedition: one team on one mountain only for one season. A puja conducted last season could not supplant for this season, even though climbers and destination would have been identical. When an expedition concludes, the spiritual coverage of the puja conducted at the beginning also terminates. The time period of the coverage is unable to be predetermined as it is separated from the respective expedition; the measure of temporal duration for the spiritual assuaging of the mountain god is inconceivable without referencing the intent and performance of the expedition.

Moreover, this endorsement of temporal duration is not merely to juxtapose a certain period of time in the future with prospective events, but to orient the future with all its possibility to what one wishes to take place. In other words, what one calls as the "future," detached from any clear prospective events, is constituted by the orientation and not existent in any linear fashion prior to the orientation. Thus, the framework of the cosmological temporal order in terms of orientation manifests the notion of time not as a sphere of a transcendental condition, operating by its own logic so as to provide a universal condition for any phenomenon to take place, but as that which always comes together with an entity, a value, a sense of it, and layers of these, all being perceived in reference to the very temporal dimension that is oriented.

In conclusion, the Walung Sherpa's dual cosmological order constitutes their epistemic structure. Epistemic practices via the structure would bring to the fore a certain

Himalayan mountaineering in which Sherpa and foreign mountaineers interact. In "Thick Resistance: Death and the Cultural Construction of Agency in Himalayan Mountaineering," Ortner (1997) has adequately pointed out, by analyzing the ritual as an example, the clash of the two groups in Himalayan mountaineering and described evolution of the ritual and meaning relations.

combination of entities (ontology), ideas (epistemology), and values (ethics), depending on the context. This operation of cosmological orders governs Sherpa ways of acting, thinking, and mattering, resolving the seeming contradiction between ethnicity and autochthony in the opening anecdote.

2.5 A Twofold Characteristic in Epistemic Structure: Potential Objectivities and Preobjective Manners

The cosmological orders schematized above do not directly engage in epistemic practices. They must be "designed" in a certain way in order to be actualized. It is so because epistemic practices exhibit a twofold character connecting potential objectivities with actual working. Pragmatism plays at the connection: for example, one may reasonably suppose a case in which a forsaken mani discovered at a corner of his motherland might someday raise a curious urban Sherpa boy's interest, further leading him to venture out on a quest for his origin. Potential objectivities—mani, ethnicity, origin—may someday conjoin to a unique action. A sort of invisible leverage at the connection already nests in the reason-ability of the supposition. I may logically, but not eurocentrically, propose this: Sherpas put themselves *indirectly* into a set of circumstances where they might practice belief and actions as *determined* by parts of the circumstances (cf. Bateson 1979: Ch.4). In this shared world of logic, an outside observer may engage in the Sherpa cosmic world by endorsing that all worlds are governed by a (uncountable) number of orders (PSWS: 231-238).

Thus, I may logically frame the study of Sherpa epistemology in a twofold way. Regarding Sherpa alternating identities, I identify the most conspicuous *potential objectivities* including naming system, ethnic identity, geographic identity, lineage system, and regional grouping. Sherpas deliberately engage in some of these through *preobjective manner*s, and this relationship is the topic of this and next sections.

Rarely in colloquial contexts would one refer to another as his or her surname. For Sherpas, their surname might be introduced when they specifically need to specify their full legal name—usually in multi-ethnic contexts like mountaineering expeditions. In Nepal, most Khas and Newar populations, such as Chetri, Bahun, and Magar, choose their family, caste, or religious appellation for their surname, whereas many, but not all, groups with Mongoloid ancestry, such as Sherpa, Tamang, Rai, Bhote, and Gurung, use ethnicity as their surname.[29] Therefore, for the latter groups it becomes more complicated. For example, Graham Clarke (1980) and Robert Desjarlais (1992) observed that some of Yolmo-pa (people of Yolmo) of the Helambu region refer to themselves as "Sherpa" to outsiders, while keeping their surname as "Lama." They do so because, Clarke argues, the Sherpa in Solukhumbu are "put on the international map by mountaineering expeditions to Everest" (Clarke 1980:79). Desjarlais further notes that they wish "to distinguish themselves ethnically from [neighboring] Tamang clans" and

[29] This difference seems owing to two causes: First, in the Nepali context people distinguish themselves basically by a duplex standard, the jaat and jaati or the caste and ethnicity (tribe). Second, under the cultural homogenization ideology of Jang Bahadur Rana's *Muluki Ain* (Civil Code) of 1854, social division had been officially recognized by the government based uniformly on the caste system (Gurung and Bhattachan 2006). That is, the ethnic differences among those who may be considered without caste classification such as some of Tibeto-Burman minorities seem to have been reduced to surname.

instead align themselves with the prestigious Sherpa (Desjarlais 1992).[30] Apart from their wish, belief, genealogy, or problematized morality (as in H. Gurung's accusation above), this case reveals their characteristic perception of their own identity and the nationwide practice of demographic classification. The official naming system practiced in Nepal offers less genealogical security than what appears among the Sherpas of Walung who invariably use Sherpa as their surname.[31]

The primordialist position would consider Sherpa ethnicity in reference to the Sherpa patrilineal system, *rhu*. Derived from *rus* (bones in Tibetan), the idea of the term is that children inherit their father's bone and that all descendants of one ancestor through the male line are thus of "one bone" (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964:20).[32] According to

[30] There have been efforts and speculations to make clear the genealogical relationship between Sherpa of Solukhumbu and Yolmo-pa of Helambu (either referred as "Yolmā" [N.] by Sri Santabir Lāmā in *Tambā Kaiten: Genealogy, habits, customs and songs of the Tamang,* [1959, cited from Macdonald 1975:129-167], "Hyolmo" [Gurung and Bhattachan 2006; Ukyab and Adhikari 2000] or "Yolmo" Tm.). Lāmā asserted both could be traced to one jāti (ethnicity), whereas Macdonald, acknowledging that some Yolmo-pa contended themselves to be called Sherpa, noted the difference and incompatibility between Yolmo-pa's and Solukhumbu Sherpa's languages and questioned the problem of the original relationship between the two groups of people (Macdonald 1975).

[31] There are Sherpas who do not use Sherpa as their surname. Tenzing Norgay Sherpa's—who, with Edmund Hillary, firstly reached the top of Mt. Everest in 1953—grandson, Tashi Tenzing, in assistance of his wife, Judy Tenzing, writes "[t]hough Sherpa was Tenzing's clan name, his descendants have sometimes taken on the names of Tenzing or Norgay as family names in order to make life in and travel to the West less complicated" (2001:xxi).

[32] Lévi-Strauss (1969) suggested that the notion of patrilineal lineage connected through bone is widespread throughout Central and East Asia. "From Tibet and Assam to Siberia and throughout China," he notes, "we have met, as the 'Leitmotif' of the indigenous theory of marriage, the belief that bones come from the father's side and flesh from the mother's side" (Lévi-Strauss 1969:393). The words, *rhu*, *ru*, *rü*, or *rui* (for Tamang), all literally meaning bone, as a particular categorizing system of lineage have been observed across societies speaking Tibetan or Tibeto-Burman languages in Central and South Asia. To what extent matrilineal lineage influences the identity of children compared to the patrilineal varies among those groups of people, from seemingly symmetrically contributing type that was abstractly construable in the early Tibetan history (Stein 1972:92-109) to that from which systematic influence from the matrilineal side is negligible, regardless of their material or immaterial ties they used to develop, a popular system observable among somewhat Sanskritized Tibeto-Burman groups in mid and highland Nepal such as Gurung, Lhomi, Rai, Tamang and Thakali, among others (McDougal 1979; Bista 2004).

Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1964), Sherpas of Khumbu believed that the number of rhus was ideally eighteen. In the Walung Sherpa community, I counted the number of rhus as eight. Among them, three are identical to those of Khumbu, while five others are absent in Solu and Khumbu. Among the five rhus, Khamba, Thinggriba, and Ngomba are herein interesting to note. For Khumbu Sherpas in the 1950s, Khamba was "pseudo-clan" and could not be considered as a proper rhu. In Khumbu, there has been a continuous influx of immigrants from Tibet across the Nangpa-la pass. Those later immigrants are called "Khamba" in a "slight denigrating manner" by the early immigrants, regardless of their ethnic background (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964). Thus, the category of Khamba potentially refers to not only Tibetan-speaking populations but also those who originated from lowland Nepal but only entered the Sherpaland through the pass. In Walung however, no sense of denigration is attached to Khamba.[33] Also, Thinggriba—literally, people of Tingri—implies an involvement with the Tingri district in China. People in the

[33] An interesting case shows the existential significance. After the heroic achievement of firstly reaching the top of Mt. Everest, Tenzing Norgay, to his surprise, fell into struggles due to his background of Khamba. When he was a child, he had moved from the Kharta valley of Tibet, east of Mt. Everest, though there seems a confusion of his origin village (Ullman 1956; Tenzing 2001). He must have been categorized as Khamba in Khumbu (cf. von Fürer-Haimendorf 1963; 1984). In the biography of Tenzing Norgay, Ed Douglas writes, "Tenzing wanted to underplay his Tibetan roots" (Douglas 2003:54) because of his lower social status of being Khamba to which, the author's speculation goes, he was uncomfortable. Contrary to this claim, however, Tenzing had delightedly lived his entire life in communities of Sherpa in Khumbu and Darjeeling, those whom he identified "my people" all along. About his naming he narrated that which the American mountaineering historian James Ramsey Ullman—carefully chosen by Tenzing himself for writing his autobiography because Ullman is not a British and because Tenzing had undergone troubles with the British of the honored expedition in 1953—writes, "Various lamas, who are the scholars of our race, have recently told me that the best rendering of my name is *Tenzing Norgay*, and this is the way I now use and spell it. Often for official purposes I add the word *Sherpa* at the end, both to help in identification and to do honour to my people. But at home and with my friends I am just Tenzing, and I hope I can stay that way" (Ullman 1956:23). This case again exhibits categorizing practices that result from formations of information system. Categories are the production of those practices and not reflections of the objective reality imagined to exist outside of the system.

district have always been in close contact with those in the southerly adjacent Nepali districts of Solukhumbu and Sankhuwasabha. To my question of whether people of Thinggriba originated from the Tingri district, a Thinggriba Sherpa agreed with no hesitation nor a sense of shame. Lastly, the case of Ngomba is worthy of note. People of Ngomba were lightly denigrated by a few Sherpas in Seduwa, yet never by those in Walung, referred to as "more like Bhote"—the name, Bhote, literally "people of Tibet," typically carries a pejorative sense in Nepal.[34] An Ngomba woman of Seduwa rebuked this despisement, however, saying, "The Bhote live in Bhote villages, and they [Ngomba] live in Sherpa villages." The faultfinder did not say anything.[35]

Therefore, territorial categories, such as "Khumbu," "Nangpa-la pass" (and the corresponding Tibet), "Tingri," and "Walung" (instead of the upper Walung), are derived from Sherpa perceptions of territory according to contexts, a focused territory that draws ontological, epistemological, and ethical significances against other places. These perceptions of territory reveal a specific territorial design, a dualist logic that distinguishes themselves from others. My point is that ethnic divide and territorial divide are intermixed and may not be clearly separable from each other.

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[34] In Sankhuwasabha district, those who are generally called Bhote live in Hatiya, Kimathanka and Chepuwa VDCs, about two days to the north from Makalu VDC. The name Bhote (Bote, Bhotia, or Bhottiya) has been applied for referring to some of Tibeto-Burman minorities including Sherpa and Hyolmo in Nepal and Sikkim. Dor Bahadur Bista suggested "Himali" (N. people of mountainous area), instead of Bhote, in order to refer to the northern border groups of people, in his pioneering work on Nepalese caste and ethnic groups, *People of Nepal* (2004), first published in 1967—which was unusually sponsored by the government. It seems that Nepalese ethnologists prefer to sympathize him (cf. Gurung and Bhattachan 2006). The Nepalese government and the United Nations employ "Mountain Janajatis" (N. indigenous people) category, while using the term Bhote in a limited sense (Nepal 2014).

[35] Whelpton notes that, among some Tibeto-Burman minorities, the sense of common ethnicity was very weak and "membership of a particular clan was sometimes more important and some clan names overlapped with those of the Gurungs or the Sherpas" (Whelpton 2005:58).

Consider two vernacular terms: *yukpa* and *rongba*. Yukpa is a Makalu Sherpa terminology to refer to a "low-caste Sherpa," who are known to live in the mid Sankhuwasabha district. It carries an obvious sense of pejoration. The prefix yuk literally means difference. There was a case in which a drunken and slightly deranged old man who introduced himself as Sherpa to a Seduwa Sherpa in a non-Sherpa village of Sankhuwasabha district. The Seduwa Sherpa referred to him as "yukpa," of course behind him. The very Seduwa Sherpa himself was also referred to by a Walung Sherpa in Walung as "yukpa" behind him. Rongba is the more frequently used term than yukpa for the Sherpas. They clearly differentiate themselves from neighboring non-Sherpa inhabitants, calling them rongba. This term connotes lowlanders. Gellner also observed "the essential contrast" between "(relatively) mobile uplanders and the rice cultivators of the more densely populated lowlands" (Gellner 2013:12). In view of the Sherpa who live in the uppermost settlements, their neighbors are all lowlanders. In Tibet, "roṅ-pa" is used to refer to inhabitants of the valleys, though not connoting ethnic or tribal divide (Stein 1972). In many regions of Tibet, both pastoral herdsmen on the upland pastures and the sedentary inhabitants of the valley have had the same tribal name under the same political system. This dual formation of settlements without tribal distinction had constituted a characteristic feature of Sherpa pattern of life in the pre-tourism Khumbu society (Stevens 1993). Interestingly, Macdonald observed that Helambu Tamang applies the same word for referring to those—mostly Baahun, Chetri and Bengali—who worshiped gods through religions other than Buddhism (Macdonald 1975:166). In the context of rural Nepal, therefore, insofar as Sherpas find their collective settlements

located in places higher than any other groups of people, the designation of rongba is owing to the respective territorial elevation in comparison to other lowlanders, whereas the notions of ethnicity or religion may or may not engage in the usage of the term.[36]

Through this particular style of perception, Sherpas use surname, rhu, religion, ethnicity and other potential objectivities. Sherpa subjectivities recognize and manage those potential objectivities, but not *vice versa*: they are not subjected by potential objectivities. On the other hand, there are manners of objectivizing, which preobjectively guide objectivizing processes as fashioned by territorially designed epistemic structure. The preobjective manners are existential conditions that determine the scope and mode of freedom for an individual to deal with potential objectivities.[37]

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[36] That "Sherpas prefer a cooler climate" is a reason given by a few Walung Sherpas to a question why all Sherpa live higher than others. Respective temperatures differ markedly. This idea also serves for reasoning that Walung Sherpa perform religious and social ceremonies in winter (i.e. "weather is good") and consider the summer and monsoon the "difficult" season. However, even though all Sherpas seem to prefer to settle in locations higher than others, this does not mean that they necessarily wish to settle down places where temperature and other climatic conditions meet certain measures. For example, although the upper Walung is the uppermost settlements, it is considerably lower than Khumbu in terms of elevation. That said, while the climate may be a subjectively important factor for their choice of settlements, the fact that no one live higher than them seems the more crucial factor, though no Sherpa says it explicitly. By having no other populations in the high Himalayan plateau, what follows is a considerable freedom in using the vast area, much greater than that of all lowlanders. It seems that there is a correlation between this atypical environment and their exceptional individuality (§6.5.2).

[37] This twofold conceptualization of Sherpa epistemic structure might invoke Lévi-Strauss's two kinds of determinism: "historical trends and special characteristics of the environment" on the one hand, and on the other, "persistent mental constraints which are independent of the environment" (Lévi-Strauss 1985:104, 115). However, since both the objective potentials and preobjective manners are associated with time and place as bound to specific ontological designing and not "independent of the environment," this objective/preobjective duality and Lévi-Strauss's historical/persistent duality are not the same. Nonetheless, his compromise of the two determinisms has reconstructed the Saussurean systemic view of meaning process by adjusting the synchronic structure with reference to diachronic development (cf. Lévi-Strauss 1985:148-156). Accordingly, one might wonder whether what I have been calling "epistemic structure" requires a sort of universal mechanism of human mind or "mental cogwheels" necessary, as Lévi-Strauss (1985:105) puts it. To the contrary, the twofold structure I am developing by no means presupposes the mental/physical pair. The two meshing gears transmitting one another, figuratively illustrative of what Lévi-Strauss theorized as a fundamental structure of mind in the production of meaning, should be considered in the conception of the twofold epistemic structure as an illusory

Tourism development, globalization, Sanskritization, capitalization, and urbanization are some obvious ongoing challenges to Sherpas of Walung in the 2010s. In accordance with all these external factors, Sherpa's potential objectivities will undergo transformations (e.g. "Sherpa" as an appellation for a mountain guide). The next section examines the contemporary feature of connection between potential objectivities and preobjective manners in the case of Sherpa's appellation systems. This investigation does

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pictorial construction resulting from the very meaning-making itself. Along the same lines, Descola criticizes Lévi-Strauss's thought as a "physicalist theory of knowledge" that "unhesitatingly naturalizes the process itself of meaning–making," accusing him as often referring to the organic nature of our species, which "guarantees the homogeneity of mental processes in all humans, holding out the promise that we will one day be able to elucidate their mechanisms" (Descola 2013b:22-3).

Similar to the twofold epistemic structure, Sahlins (1978; 1995; 2000; 2002) has consistently advocated "systematicity of culture," variously defined in the terms including "logical and ontological continuities," "form and function," "cultural scheme" and "specific cultural order," for the sake of which syncretism operates as a systemic condition for culture (see esp. the 1993 article, "Goodbye to *Tristes Tropes*" [2000]) rather than as a contradiction. For him, hence, it follows that "the objectivity of the object is always selective" (Sahlins 2002:42). His criticism on the objectivist position overrides a popular version of the subjectivist critique, so long as he examines a particular disposition as a product of its ontological background, condemning "the bourgeois solipsism of an individual in need of the object" (Sahlins 1995:154). But I suspect his contemplation to be an inverted version of the Lévi-Strauss's "open structure" (Lévi-Strauss 1985:104)—that is, an individual may take or not the worldview from her own culture, which is still an arbitrary selection from the total world (which is filled with individual subjectivities, albeit of diverse characters). On the arbitrariness of the figuration of the structure, he writes: "the action of nature unfolds in the terms of culture; that is, in a form no longer its *own* but embodied as meaning" (Sahlins 1978:209). This dualism of nature/culture in his anthropological framework continued, so that Gellner reads him as advocating the idea that "there are distinguishable and different cultures against a corrosive postmodernism" (Gellner 2008:31). It took a long time for him to define culture as "a metaphysical pseudo-entity" (Sahlins 2002:30-33). However, as he supposes the subject/object duality inevitable, it follows, for him, assumed properties of an individual, subjectivity is one: "Leviathanology and Subjectology are in endless oscillation. To paraphrase Marx, culturology has never gone beyond the antithesis between itself and individualism, and the latter will accompany it as its legitimate negation up to their blessed end" (Sahlins 2002:71). In any case, his project is less on inspecting the nature of such a specific cultural order, which I am dealing with, than pleaing an emphasis on it.

Confusions between objective potentials and preobjective manners seem to have been not uncommon among anthropologists of Sherpa, including von Fürer-Haimendorf in his laments in *The Sherpas Transformed* (1984). Barbara Brower, too, describes the "transformation" of Sherpa: "Yes, they are one people … [but] A complex mix of processes of adaptation has simply continued to work on Solukhumbu Sherpa, as on people everywhere, fitting ever-changing people to an ever-changing place" (Brower 1996:255). This primordialist eulogy disregards "the logical and ontological continuities" (Sahlins 2000:475) based on which Sherpas interpret and respond to the globalizing world.

not intend to essentialize a certain type of worldview unchanging for a certain group of Sherpas: preobjective manners also keep changing.

2.6 Sherpa Staff Allocation: Intimacy of Episteme

As those and other village rituals and gatherings (e.g. marriage) concluded mostly during the winter, a number of young adults including Purba and Dawa Sangge, in ones and twos, took the now three days journey to Kathmandu, on foot and by taking a jeep and flying on an airplane. In the capital, Sherpas from Walung have formed their provisional residency mostly in the Kapan district in the northeastern outskirts of the capital. Few Sherpas would have been encountered on the idle district throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century. In the early 2010s, an increasing number of Sherpas from Walung and Seduwa have settled down there, revolving around restaurants, snooker halls, and tourism agency offices, and keeping moving between the villages and the capital.

Back to the initial inquiry of Sherpa's complicated appellation and naming system, I further explore the epistemic practices of a Kathmandu-based expedition agency. The 2013 international Manaslu expedition above was organized by Seven Summit Treks (SST), a tourism agency in Kapan owned by four Sherpa brothers from Walung. Founded in 2008, SST has in recent years enjoyed a thriving business specialized in high-altitude mountaineering. Among the sixteen hundred registered trekking agencies in Nepal (as of 2013), SST paid the largest sum of taxes in the 2013

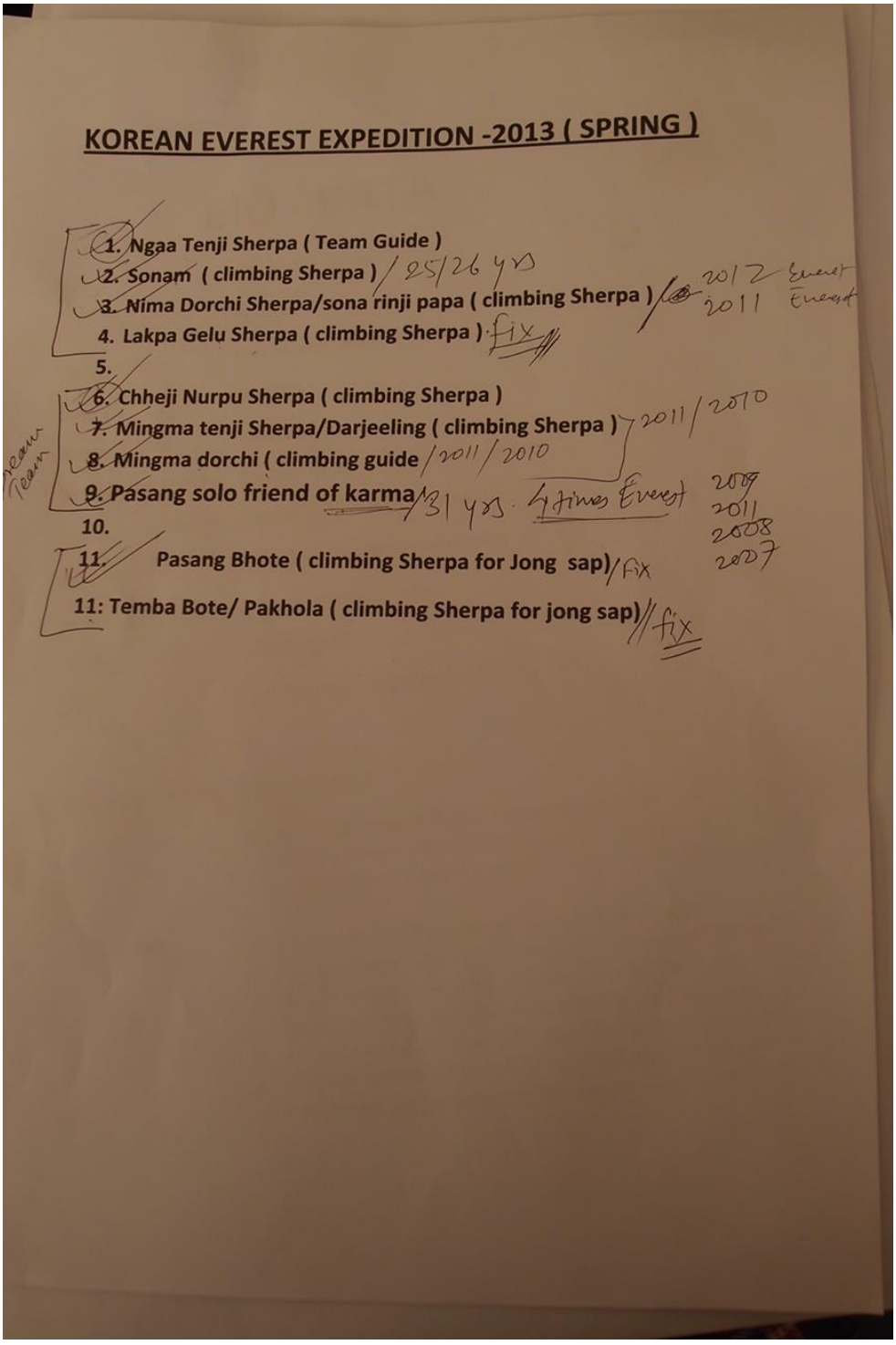


Figure 2-8. The working sheet for assignment of climbing guides for the two Korean Mt. Everest expeditions, spring 2013. Photo by the author.

fiscal year. The four brothers-directors determine expedition staff by allocating Sherpas in their pool to each expedition as they make contract with foreign counterparts.

The working sheet in Figure 2-8 exhibits a broader range of categories utilized for designating individuals with respective positions. Both of the two Korean teams have required the assignment four climbing Sherpas each. In the latter team, a Korean client-climber, referred to as "jong sab," asked, with additional payment, to hire two climbing Sherpas ("personal Sherpas"). Two blank lines (No. 5 and No. 10) figuratively divide each grouping. The colloquial, semi-technical naming, "climbing Sherpa," instead of "Climbing Guide," is used in order to indicate climbing Sherpa (with a mistake on No. 8). Significantly for the staff, a micro category is newly introduced: "Team Guide" (No. 1) represents and leads all Nepali employees in both teams. The fact that only one team guide works for two separate expeditions reveals differing viewpoints on Himalayan expeditions between foreign (Korean) and domestic (Nepali) members. For Koreans, the expeditions are separate no matter whether they feel intimacy, so that they tend to ignore the significance and leverage of the team guide's role over the Nepali staff and expedition progression. This discrepancy can lead to conflicts between two counterparts.

The most interesting point in this document is the varied ways of naming of individuals. In this case, five principles are put into use thus:

- First name: exemplified in Nos. 2, 8;
- Full legal name: exemplified in Nos. 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 11:[*sic*];
- Teknonymy: exemplified in No. 3 ("sona rinji papa");

- Territoriality: exemplified in No. 7 ("Darjeeling"), No. 9 ("solo" [*sic*]), and No. 11 ("Pakhola" [*sic*]);[38] and
- Interpersonal relation: exemplified in No. 9 ("friend of karma").

A further analysis may clarify the ways in which Sherpas deal with objective potentials in terms of appellation. First, using the first name reflects the mundane and interpersonal usage which would be applied only to those who are acquainted so well as their shortened names to raise little confusion at the managers' references. The listed two—Sonam and Mingma Dorchi—were, in fact, cousins and long-time village friends, and frequently present at the agency office in those days as well. No one in the agency would mistake the individuals to whom these names referred. To be sure, among the Sherpas, using the first name is not an exclusively common type of naming. A variety of nicknames and "village names" are better used in many cases; however, no such usage is used in this informal document. For example, Mingma Dorchi in No. 8 has been more often called "Ming Dorji," a shortened form of his fuller name. This keeping a rule of limited formality—not using too a mundane form—indicates the amount of seriousness involved in this informal decision-making gathering.

Secondly, like in Figure 2-1, stating one's full legal name will be the final step of designating individuals to create an official announcement both to each designated employee and to the government department. However, the designation of a full legal

[38] As the Nepalis often pronounce, here "solo" refers to Solu of Solukhumbu district and "Pakhola" denotes Pawakhola VDC of Sankhuwasabha district.

name may potentially raise confusion and hardly stand alone in most cases for various reasons (e.g. many have same names). This is why full names are often used with other qualifications in the list; sometimes even shortened names may help better to avoid the potential confusion.

It is apparent from the work sheet that what matters during the staff allocation process is to reference individuals without confusion. To this, participants in the meeting endeavored to narrow down each scope of the signified by selecting and adding up the significations. If a designation is less than indisputable enough, an additional categorization is brought into play. A final designation that is unequivocal may not need to be identified with an actual person; an indexing gesture may be enough as in No. 9 where the accountability is shifted onto a third person ("karma"). The purpose of the sheet concludes *intimate*—in the sense that no designation would invoke a sense of ambiguity or alienation—when all confusions detected *de facto* by the community of the users are resolved, not when intrinsic properties of individuals are seized upon, nor when Saussurean arbitrary associations between the signal and the signification are clarified.

Therefore, a moment of achieving episteme ("justified true belief" by Plato) takes place at the collective mind through an interplay of the summoned objective potentials comprising the five principles of designation in the case above. Over the summoning, the preobjective manners once unclear and chaotic elsewhere exercise their mastery and thus become apparent in practice.

Back to the document of Figure 2-1, it is now clearer how powerful the social force that the announcement carries could be. Designating every primary employee by

their full legal names and not by others may definitely risk confusion from the perspective of its viewer. In actuality, however, no one suffers from such a confusion, as long as everyone on the list was already informed of the employment contract by the decision-makers. The announcement document aims less to provide the news to the listed individuals than to formalize the contract by using the force of officiality, carrying an aura of governmental administration in which no one would, for the purpose of the approval of the expedition permit application, use mundane appellations other than the full legal name. In particular, the term "Sherpa" in the head undertakes the implementation of the exceptional privilege. Though this kind of usage of the term "Sherpa" is not frequent, today it is certainly valid when the categorical term Sherpa specifies an official, main, and responsible staff of a respective expedition, accompanied by a distinguished sense of privilege, as contrasted with semiofficial, subsidiary, and attendant laborers including kitchen helpers (sometimes "kitchen boy") and lowland load carriers ("porters"). In the mountain tourism industry in today's Nepal, there would be rarely a case in which kitchen helpers or lowland porters might be referred to as their full legal names. The mundane appellations, on the other hand, was rolled back once more to the state of informal, unofficial, and periphery relations.

Further, the announcement is not so much secure as vulnerable, as long as it is not intended for the intimacy of the provided information. The vulnerability in the naming does not emanate from possible future changes in the determination, but emerges from the very fixation of the nominations. The full legal names suffice only to hint at, and not fully to provide, objects of intimate understanding. Instead, an array of objective

potentials in Sherpa naming practices must come into play to comprehend the given information, potentials including systems of nickname, first name, teknonymy, territoriality, and social relation, among others.

It is partly because of this sense of detachment and vulnerability why Sherpas are likely to use their full name only in somehow official occasions, for example, introducing themselves at the first meeting with foreign mountaineers at a Himalayan mountaineering expedition. The set of interplays among those epistemic ventures may be called a "big" game in the sense that it may be used at a large scale of village pujas. I have noted that a "big" puja is not yet a "good" puja; whether or not a puja is good cannot be determined before it concludes. After a dhaaja puja finalized, Sherpas might describe the newly decorated house *lhemu-nok* (literally, "it has been good"). Of course, the colorful and fresh chotar and lungda may look fine to the foreign observer's eyes, too. However, like Khamba of Khumbu and Ngomba of Seduwa, who might have to be treated with a slight denigration by some fellow villagers on account of characteristic Sherpa preobjective manners, the aesthetics of the puja may not also rely much on the capacity of, if any, essential visionary cognition, as it were. Likewise, the aestheticism of the usage of the term Sherpa may not be directly defined by, as H. Gurung and Desjarlais have inferred above, those apparently positive and prestigious statuses the word brings together. The pragmatic quality—the totality of ontological, epistemological, and ethical values—of any given identification system is in no way obvious to a foreign observer and cannot be graspable before performing epistemic practices through the society of thinkings, a society that does not require actual individuals to form it.

While identification of Sherpa may involve multiple senses, Makalu Sherpas use the designation in a characteristic way that is figured by Sherpa ontology, epistemology, and ethics. In short, Sherpas objectivize in a Sherpa manner. The manner is not Sherpa's creation nor the observer's. Presented with introductions of all the full names of the Nepali staff, foreign visiting mountaineers are not likely to have noticed this aesthetic play inherent in the apparently direct designations. Some might express curiosity about the exotic Sherpa naming system as it is known from travel guides or magazine articles, that is, a given name is ordinarily determined by the date when he or she was born—if a Sherpa was born on Sunday, the primary choice for the infant's name is Nima; if Monday, Dawa; if Tuesday, Mingma and so on. Or, considerate foreigners may wish to respect the Sherpa way of using their names. A Korean mountaineer once asked my opinion about how he might call his Sherpa guide in a politer way, if calling simply "Dawa" would be offensive. Well, it seemed to me that there was no other option than to advise him to call the guide "Mr. Dawa." The more estranged from their ordinary usage, the better the aesthetic task in each instance of the calling—a name "good" to their ears.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter consists of two related discussions: the common fallacy of primordialist (objectivist) and modernist (subjectivist) positions in the scholarship of South Asian studies on the one hand, and, on the other, my theoretical suggestion to move beyond the fallacy. The fallacy was the academic eurocentrism which ignores distinctiveness in epistemic practices. My methodological suggestion was a pragmatic

phenomenology as a combination of the Peircean pragmatism and the Heideggerian existential phenomenology. This methodological framework claims to attain a logical world in which diverse cosmic worlds may intersect.

To wrap up, both of the two opposing positions are limited when answering the question, "Who are Sherpa?" The question easily turns into a question of Sherpa origin, so that the Sherpa's history of migration and practice of lineage have frequently been brought to the table. There exist several versions of the origin of the Sherpa, which do not match with one another in many regards. While the subjectivist/modernist position would question internal politics and the anthropologist's viewpoint, the pragmatic phenomenological perspective argues that there are still elements that anyone could reasonably suppose with regard to history and lineage. Sherpas in upper Walung in northeastern Nepal may not share the same descent line with those in Solukhumbu district; however, both historical events and group oppositions make them enough to call themselves Sherpa.

Moreover, the perspective clarifies the distinction between Sherpa identification categories and the ways Sherpas use them. Sherpas perceive their lives and the world by means of a twofold epistemic structure: potential objectivities and preobjective manners. This distinction is important because too often have anthropological discussions relied on anthropologists' own ways of objectivizing in regard to time, place, and social relationship, among others, and thereby some of the objectivities are easily regarded as the manners. In short, culture has often been reduced to substance (Friedman 2013). To overcome this reductionism, I suggest the cosmic territorial order as focus and the cosmic

temporal order as orientation. The two poles of cosmic orders design the preobjective manners. In this constitution of epistemology, Sherpas perceive and use, among others, the name "Sherpa." This is not merely a traditional, essential, or "local" attitude. Sherpas of Walung employ this epistemology when living through the unknown, relational, and global world, such as Himalayan mountaineering and related tourism industries in Nepal. The Sherpas' epistemological patterns are exemplified by a comparison between two documents used for expedition staff allocation. On the one hand, the naming "Sherpa" is used in multiple ways at the same time. That said, it is not that a word can refer to various connotations, but that the conflict between meanings sometimes carries little significance. In the industry, Sherpas seem not favoring much of linguistic principles such as unambiguity, precision, perspicuity, and definitude, compared to social forces carried by various naming systems including first name, full legal name, teknonymy, territoriality, social relation, and occupational category, among others.

No intimacy of episteme can be securable through a historical and social structure of feeling that rather mechanically translates objects that are drawn up from the essence, the reality, "web of meaning" (Geertz), "mental cogwheels" (Lévi-Strauss) or whatever presupposed ground yet merely invisible. This image-reality dualism merely reflects the epistemological framework resulting from the academic eurocentrism. What is invisible is not such a grand sea of objects, but the meaning-making process. The pragmatic phenomenological perspective is useful to investigate distinctive modes of the process.

Chapter 3. The Sherpa in the Western Idea: Anthromanticism and the Eurocentric Respect

3.1 Introduction: A Discord on Mt. Everest

This chapter examines how the Sherpa have been conceptualized in Western discourse. Since my dissertation research did not focus on Western mountaineering beyond a few chance encounters, this chapter attains to a critique rather than an ethnographic discussion. Yet the findings of this chapter will contribute to the overall goals of the dissertation by identifying eurocentric assumptions regarding Himalayan mountaineering and the Sherpa. By doing so, I will try to resist the assumptions in the following chapters. Here, I use the category "Western" in a way that is loosely and abstractly defined. I will keep using the capital W as in "Western" to refer to descendants of the quintessential Greek-Hebrew cosmology. Another term "Modernity" will also use the capital M when I refer to Western modernity.

I will focus on delineating two major approaches that are most significant to the Western understanding of the Sherpa: Himalayan mountaineering and anthropological research and critique. By juxtaposing the two approaches, this chapter attempts to identify common and opposing elements between the two. To this end, I will explore how the two approaches intersect historically, epistemologically, and ethically. First, I briefly outline the grounding theoretical framework in which mountaineers and scholars are jointly operating from sharing two epistemological principles: social atomism and existential dualism. Second, I characterize the Western approach in the Himalayas. In this

"genealogical" examination, I discuss how mountaineering expeditions and scientific fieldwork have diverged from each other. By identifying major transitions in the history of Himalayan mountaineering, I attempt to discover the unchanging eurocentric dispositions. Third, I delve into the construction of the category of Sherpa in Western discourse. By reading mountaineers' travelogues, philosophers' treatises, anthropologists' commentaries, and scientists' theses, the section seeks to identify how the Sherpa are analytically and existentially conceptualized in Western epistemology. This epistemological grounding may be related to ethical consideration about the Sherpa in both mountaineers' and anthropologists' discourses. The Sherpa are not merely one of many local groups of people the Western visitors would encounter in the East, but are more deeply interconnected through, more than anything else, the highly dangerous sport of Himalayan mountaineering. In the last section, I survey the Western anthropologists' and mountaineers' ethical views about the Sherpa. Though both approaches claim to pursue "respect" in relation to the local population, it seems that both fall short of what Sherpa mountaineers would favor, as evidenced in ethnographic examples by my research. This identification of Western understanding of the Sherpa will serve for the main goal of the dissertation which is to understand Sherpa mountaineering experience in global and intercultural contexts.

Case: A Brawl between Western and Sherpa Climbers on Mt. Everest

It was sensational to the world that a group of Sherpas assaulted three Western climbers at Camp Two (6,500m/21,300ft) of Mt. Everest on April 27, 2013. To climb a



Figure 3-1. The reconciliation gathering. Three days after the brawl on Camp Two, Three Western climbers and one Sherpa leader (all with white scarfs on their necks) gathered at the Sagarmatha Pollution Control Committee in Base Camp to set up reconciliation under the jurisdictive authority of the Nepali official. April 2, 2013. Photo by the author.

bold new route on the highest mountain the trio climbed up the sheer Lhotse Face aiming for acclimatization. Next to them was another small group of Sherpas selected to set up ("fix") the rope on the wall for the hundreds of other climbers. Between the two parties, however, a series of hostile squabbles occurred when they met near Camp Three. It is unclear what exactly happened between them: one Sherpa accused the Swiss Ueli Steck of "touching" him, while the Westerners reported the Sherpa rappelled down directly to Steck who was climbing unroped. The Italian Simone Moro cursed the Sherpas as "machikne" (N. literally motherfucker), a grave insult, and thus had them infuriated. As the three Westerners came back to Camp Two, a larger group of Sherpas gathered

around the Westerners' camp and collectively attacked—punched, slapped and stoned them, forcing them down to Base Camp. Three days later, the Westerners and the Sherpa leader made a reconciliation gathering at Base Camp under the jurisdictive authority of a Nepali co-leader of the India/Nepal Army Everest Expedition, who happened to be a high-ranking governmental official (Figure 3-1).

The brawl on the highest mountain presented an unwieldy cultural moment. The odd incident was broadcast to the world in no time. A media storm followed, including blogs and op-ed pieces about the one-way violence against the Westerners and indicting the "Sherpa mob"—a phrase which, chosen by one of the three Westerners, irritated some Sherpas and critics. Soon after, however, counter criticisms surfaced, critiquing the criminalizing of the indigenous mountain guides and sympathizing with the sacrificial yet unsung heroes. It was confusing for laypersons and pundits alike: blame was shiftingback and forth between the Western mountaineers and the local mountain workers, juxtaposing awkwardly the globalizing forces of Western capitalism and a seemingly uncouth, unsacred, and utilitarian local culture. There were two positions: mountaineers in the West see the Sherpa-foreigner relationship as mutually beneficial—that is, their climbing provides Sherpas with work and money—whereas critics see this relationship as exploitative of the Sherpa's labor. The former is a sportsman's perspective while the latter is a reflective perspective. The former is psychologist, the latter is historicist. Merging the two positions, the US-based mountaineering magazine, *Alpinist*, published a

detailed article, “2013 Everest Report: A Curse, a Fight and the Aftermath” (Cameron 2013). It outlines what happened and analyzes causes of the event.

A genealogical interpretation of this conversation between the athletic mind and the reflective mind in the West may outline how the West came to view the Sherpa. The observation may be called “genealogical” in the sense Michel Foucault (1979) uses it, since, in viewing the discourses, I focus on the making and enduring of the contrast between the two minds. I will also maintain that this opposition between the psychologist and the historicist is peculiarly meaningful to the Modern Western world and not necessarily to non-Western communities, including Sherpa and Korean mountaineers.

This framework, aiming at a more elemental level than that in which the discursive divergence takes place, brings to light an *atomistic* assumption common to the two opposing—psychologist versus historicist—positions. This assumption postulates the individual an essential entity of social agency. The assumption has often been articulated as a basic premise in classic sociological writings. In *Naven* (1980[1936]), Gregory Bateson proposed the concept of “schismogenesis” and distinguished between heresy and schism, saying, “heresy is the term used for the splitting of a religious sect in which the divergent group have doctrines antagonistic to those of the parent group, while schism is the term used for the splitting of a sect in which two resulting groups have the same doctrine, but separate and competing politics” (Bateson 1980:177, fn.1). This merger of an unquestioned psychological capacity and linear historical processes results in the sociological scheme, in which individuals must participate in atomistic social relations with capacities equal to one another, thereby either competing or collaborating.

In recent decades, academic discourses on mountaineering and the Sherpa show this pattern. Kenneth Mason, the first historian to write exclusively on the subject of Himalayan mountaineering, affirmed all exploratory quests, whether scientific or sporting, to involve "an indescribable thrill" (Mason 1955:55). Half a century later, Maurice Isserman (2006) decried Himalayan mountaineering as a "culture of Narcissism at high altitude." Historicizing mountaineers as "products of their own eras" (Isserman 2006) is now a popular view shared by mountaineering historians.[39] Academics, followed by some journalists, began to investigate the social and political backgrounds of mountaineers and considered the practical dealings of mountaineers in the context of their social identities—race, class, gender, etc.—which are, Joseph Taylor argues, central to "explaining community attitudes about sport and nature" (Taylor 2010:7). Social constructivism—"Man is social product," argued Berger and Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967)—spotlights the arbitrariness inherent in the standards on which mountaineers make claims of "authentic" mountaineering appeal and experience. In the same vein, many scholars claim that encounters between visiting mountaineers and welcoming Sherpas can be best understood by situating them in social nexuses and historical processes, along with contrasting discursive binaries such as amateurism versus professionalism, controlled risk versus egoist bravado, climbing liminality versus modernistic disenchantment, brotherhood versus hyper individualism and so on (Adams

[39] Two publications on mountaineering history mark the classical and Modern concept of mountaineering. One is *Abode of Snow* (1955) written by Kenneth Mason and is the first authoritative history of Himalayan mountaineering, although some descriptions certainly read "anti-American" (Isserman and Weaver 2008:53). The other is *A Century of Mountaineering* (1957) written by Arnold Lunn and is centered on the view of mountaineering as a mountain venture "for its own sake"—although one might accuse it of being anglophile (Taylor 2010).

1996; 1997; Fisher 1987; 1990; Hansen 2000; Ortner 1997; 1999; Parker 1989). This constructivst approach is partly shared by a handful of research-based journalistic critics on the subject of Western-Sherpa encounter (Douglas 2003; 2015; Kodas 2008; Neale 2002). The primary concern of this "ethnosociological" approach, as Bourdieu (1962) would term it, is the societal positioning of an individual, that is to say, their capacity to interact, negotiate, and transact with one another. In short, every individual is assumed as intrinsically the social actor that constitutes the fundamental unit of a society.

Not only does the genealogical framework inspect such the atomistic assumption of psychology, sociology, and history embedded in much of the anthropology of the Sherpa and perceptions of mountaineering, but it may also reveal an existential duality unchanging under the schismogenetic transitions of both academia and mountaineering. Here, I consider what Descola calls the "Great Divide," the Modern duality of nature and culture (Descola 2013a[2005]). In the dualist frame, Descola argues, are Cartesian inanimate nature that is "dumb, odor-free, and intangible …left devoid of life" on the one hand, and, on the other, transcendental perspectives that, in viewing nature, "would in future never cease to endeavor to fathom its mysteries and define its limitations" (Descola 2013a: 61, 69). An ontological regime for this dualist cosmology is provided by Aristotle's atomistic nature, which is "the sum total of beings that are ordered by and submitted to laws" (Descola 2013a: 65). Though the Platonic *idea* turned into the Aristotelian Law, a substratal cosmology seems to have continued for all time, one that has shaped the Greek-Hebrew tradition and implemented through variations of the antithetical duality. I will argue that mountaineering in its historically original concept

represents this foundational clash between Human subject and Natural object. This ontological groundwork sustains the basic mindset of mountaineering, however multifarious, a mindset constituted by the Modern paradox as Weber stated: a rational project versus a pursuit of mystical intentions.[40] The dissociative character built in the rational/mystic dichotomy of Modern mind accounts for the mountaineers' attitudes towards not only the natural landscapes in which they are actively engaging, but also the people they meet on the hills, including the Sherpa.

Considering the scholarly and existential assumptions at once, the Sherpa in the Western idea appear to embody pseudo-Western features: Western psychology and physiology to constitute frames of society (sociology) and Eastern mind and body to constitute members of community (mysticism as opposed to rationalism). I call this approach "anthromanticism." Due to the appeal of anthromanticism, the Westerners seek to understand not only mountain climbing but also the mountainous people. The sacredness of Mt. Everest is passed onto the Sherpa.

By proposing anthromanticism I do not mean my own anthropological project throughout this dissertation to be free from the eurocentric assumptions or to attain to a sort of "Eastern anthropology." "The study of culture," Roy Wagner argues, "*is* culture [and] in fact *our* culture" (Wagner 1981:16). Deliberating Modern projects, Western

[40] To the value-neutralizing modern philosophies, which differ from the traditional medieval value-laden reasons, the nineteenth-century Europeans responded with individual aestheticism (In 2008). Arguing that traditions, values, and emotions as motivators for behavior in society are replaced by rational and calculated intentions by what he called rationalization, Weber described the sharp contrast of intellectual integrity represented by science to all personal ethical qualities, so that the intellect created "unbrotherly aristocracy" (Weber 2005[1920-1]:340-4; see Habermas 1984:229). See Bellah (1999) for a detailed discussion on the historical origin and sociality of, contrastively to worldly love, the "world-denying love" or *Liebesakosmismus*, the existential love for all without distinction that Weber described in the paper

anthropologists have been "wishing to be otherwise" (Zengotita 1989:76), in a parallel way to which Western mountaineers engage in exploratory and climbing problems, both aspiring to read the "book of nature" (Descola 2013b:67). I wish not only to admit my project's genealogical location in the line being centered on Europe, but still to explore alternative possibilities. Anthropological reflection indeed allows one to do this, since each anthropological project, as Sahlins notes, "has been forced to reconcile its own cultural presuppositions with the experience of other natives" (Sahlins 2000[1982]:279). Mountaineers' encounter with the Sherpa rests on a foundation of epistemology, prior to sociology, psychology, history and physiology playing any role.[41]

Zwischenbetrachtung ("Religious Rejections of the World and their Directions," 1915).

[41] What I mean by epistemology needs a fuller explanation, and I believe the following discussion with the philosopher James Maffie's (2015) "ethnoepistemology" may help the reader. I disagree with his scheme. In my view, what may properly be called "ethnoepistemology" is inherently contradictory and logically flawed. My position is that two or more epistemologies are unable to simultaneously coexist in anyone's consciousness, considering the singularity of the individual consciousness at any given moment. Thus, a true recognition of an epistemology that differs from one's own is improbable. Maffie suggests ethnoepistemology as a subdiscipline of anthropology and argues that "its approach to human epistemological activities parallels anthropological approaches to other cultural practices such as morality, magic, shamanism, religion, and law" (Maffie 2015). However, his notion of anthropological inquiry is classical and undoubtedly of objectivist. For example, he quotes Evans-Pritchard's study of the Nuer cognitive capacity, which is not only criticized by a number of anthropologists (e.g. Bloch 2012), but, more importantly, is a representation of another epistemology via the anthropologist's epistemology. This further means that Maffie's concept of epistemological activity is categorized *a priori* as the phenomena multitudinously happening within each unquestioned boundary of individual human being, and this presupposition implements epistemology as a subject of classically defined anthropological study: "Epistemological activities are simply one among many natural phenomena, simply one among many human endeavors, and as such properly studied by anthropology" (Maffie 2015). In consequence, what he calls ethnoepistemology defers nothing but to academic relativist activism (e.g. to avoid "arrogant provincialism" of assuming Western philosophy the philosophy proper, as he reasons for the proposed subdiscipline), appeals to the egalitarianism in vogue across academia, and finally falls back on a circular objectivist-constructivist trap: a supreme meta-knower must be supposed in order to objectively know the other's knowing process in its entirety.

3.2 Western Dispositions on the Mountain, Mountain Climbing, and Ethnographic Fieldwork

This section aims to identify longstanding and grounding characteristics in Western approaches to Alpine climbing, Himalayan mountaineering, and ethnographic fieldwork. Firstly, I suggest that there are shared aspects between Western mountaineering and anthropology, historically and epistemologically. Secondly, I contend that Western Himalayan mountaineers show more clearly the eurocentric disposition, as Sahlins (2008) identifies, namely, Thucydidesian hierarchy, Adamsian equality, and Hobbesian anarchy. This characterization of the Western approach in the Himalayas will help in following sections to investigate the construction of the Sherpa in the Western idea.

3.2.1 The Birth of the Scientific Expedition: Shared Roots of Mountaineering and Ethnographic Fieldwork

The concept and practice of anthropological field research share with the notion of exploratory and athletic mountaineering expedition both historical and psychological roots in early nineteenth century Prussia (see Stagl 1995; Vermeulen 2015a; 2015b). While the practice of scholarly field research was socially sanctioned, climbing and mountaineering were not. In any case, the practice and understanding of each pursuit came together around their motivational aspect.

The concept of fieldwork derived from a diplomatic mixture between Enlightenment and Romantic philosophies, in which the rise of a new appreciation of

natural landscapes played a critical role. Marjorie Hope Nicolson (1959) chronicles the advent of what she calls "New Philosophy" in the late seventeenth century. This religious and aesthetic tradition was enjoyed by an array of thinkers who conceptualized mountain as "a feeling." Based on this unprecedented way of viewing landscape, Rousseau[42] and Goethe became among those of the first "romantic wanderers" who went out to the field to seek such feeling. They were followed a century later by those whom Joseph Amato calls "scientific wanderers" (2004:116). For them, nature denoted verifiable realities of environment (e.g. glacier and stratum) and was a principal object of scientific inquiry. They began to pursue ethnological as well as geological projects, which necessitated adventurous journeys admired by the Romantic public.[43]

Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) was a principal figure in the diplomatic fusion of science and romance. Under the mentorship of Goethe, Humboldt traveled more than six thousand miles across America for five years (1799-1804). In the expedition, he made observations characterized by painstaking empiricism, thereby "setting the standard

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[42] Claire-Eliane Engel (1930) claimed that Rousseau did not focus much on the beauty of the Alps (see Lunn 1957: Ch.1; Holmes 2006). However, it is true that his 1761 novel, *Lettres de deux amans habitans d'une petite ville au pied des Alpes* (later printed in a new title, *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*), had raised an unforeseen number of the Alps visitors.

[43] In his 1962 lecture, Lévi-Strauss (1983[1976]: Ch.2) credited Rousseau as the founder of ethnology and his *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality* (1755) as the first treatise of general ethnology. Lévi-Strauss also argued that Rousseau pioneered not only in the practical way of writing the manuscript, but in a theoretical way of distinguishing the object proper of the ethnologist from that of the moralist and the historian: "When one wants to study men, one must look around oneself; but to study man, one must first learn to look into the distance; one must first see differences in order to discover characteristics'" (Lévi-Strauss 1983:35).
James Hutton (1726-1797) published a primer on geology, *Theory of the Earth* in 1795. Giving a deserved credit to him, the Edinburgh geologist John Playfair (1748-1819) greatly influenced the later geological studies by publishing *Illustration of the Huttonian Theory of the Earth* (1802). In the book, he noticed glaciers as geological agents for the first time: "For the moving of large masses of rock … the most powerful agents without doubt which nature employs are the glaciers, those lakes and rivers of ice which are formed in the highest valleys of the Alps" (Putnam 2014:39).

of contemporary scientific work" (Amato 2004:116).[44] Although Humbolt was not an ethnologist *per se*, his scientific expedition seems to have pioneered both anthropological long-term fieldwork and mountaineering expeditions in view of the considerable impact of his study and his position at the center of the scientific world in Paris over the course of subsequent decades (Amato 2004: Ch.4, fn. 58).[45] Following his example, exploratory scientific research, or scientific long-term fieldwork, a mixture of enlightenment curiosity and romantic yearning, began to flourish throughout Europe. In most of the earlier cases, it seems virtually impossible to distinguish between scientific aims and the zeal of exploration in the reports, travelogues, and journals written by scientific explorers of the ensuing era, such as Charles Darwin (1809-1882, *Voyage of the Beagle*, 1839), Alfred Russel Wallace (1823-1913, *The Malay Archipelago*, 1869), George Kennan (1845-1924,

[44] Overviewing Alexander von Humboldt's pioneering expedition, Amato identifies him as the spiritual Father of Modern ecological thinkers. The thinkers include Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henri David Thoreau, John Muir, and Charles Darwin, who "directed the ever faithful foot toward nature on a pedestrian journey that took alternate steps between romantic awe and scientific knowledge" (Amato 2004:117). See "Alexander von Humboldt's Natural Legacy and Its Relevance for Today," *Northeastern Naturalist* 8, special issue, no. 1, 2001. For his contribution to American egalitarianism and environmentalism see Laura Dassow Walls (2009). For his "radical romanticism" in his then-extraordinary journey and its influence see Aaron Sachs (2006). For his various influences see Nicolaas A. Rupke (2005). The historic scientific expedition resulted in twenty-nine volumes on American geography, zoology, and botany, along with numerous ethnological observations. In his five volumes of *Kosmos* (1845-62) Humboldt conceived of nature as "a unity within the diversity of phenomena" (Bunzl 1996:38). His universalism in the cosmographical approach, according to H. Glenn Penny (2007), is shared by his *protégé* Adolf Bastian who believed that "the world as a whole was knowable, down to its smallest details, and he was convinced that understanding the details and their relationships with each other were critical to understanding the whole" (Penny 2007:53).

[45] Humboldt might be better called as a geographer rather than an anthropologist, as most scholars in the field would admit, and his another disciple Karl Ritter succeeded geographic studies and sought after geographical determinism, saying "man is dependent on the nature of his dwelling-place" (Bunzl 1996:41). On the other hand, his brother Wilhelm von Humboldt has also impacted significantly the foundation of hermeneutic tradition and later, together with Ritter's geographical determinism, on the Boasian tradition of American anthropology. Wilhelm von Humboldt's groundbreaking project "*Plan einer vergleichenden Anthropologie*" ("Plan for a Comparative Anthropology," devised sometime between 1795 and 1797) that asserted the common nature of humanity furnished a great impact on hermeneutic tradition to have conceived *verstehen* (roughly "understanding," the central concept of Wilhelm Dilthey) or

Tent Life in Siberia, 1870), Henry Morton Stanley (1841-1904, *Through the Dark Continent*, 1878) and more.[46] On the other hand, by the mid-nineteenth century, the influx of middle-class tourists and the growing industries to support them brought new attitudes to seekers of the sublime. The Alps became familiar and approachable (Colley 2010). At the height of advancing exploratory science, the Himalayas arose as what Nicholas Roerich, the founder of the Himalayan Research Institute, dubbed, a "veritable Mecca for a sincere scientist" (Roerich 1990[1929]:22).[47]

In the midst of this welcoming invitation to the scientific appeal to nature, mountaineering, as a derivation of scientific exploration, was under suspicion, if not controversial, in European countries. Modern mountaineering is widely considered to be initiated in 1786 by the first ascent of Mont Blanc (4,807m/15,771ft), the highest mountain in the Alps. The Swiss geologist Horace-Bénédict de Saussure (1740-1799) played a key role in this historic achievement.[48] He gave a scientific reason for the climb,

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Völkerpsychologie ("folk psychology").

[46] The Latin poet Virgil's (70-19 BC) famous verse "*Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas Atque metus omnes*" ("Happy is the man who is able to know the causes of things") was quoted by the Swiss glaciologist Ignaz Venetz (1788-1859) and turned into a scientific appeal to nature: "Take care to learn of time, the winds, and habits of the heavens" (Putnam 2014:43).

[47] Roerich noted: "The entire Himalayan region offers exceptional fields for scientific research. Nowhere else in the whole world can such varied conditions be concentrated: Peaks up to almost thirty thousand feet; lakes at an elevation of fifteen thousand feet; deep valleys with geysers and all types of hot and cold mineral springs; the most unsuspected vegetation—all this vouches for unprecedented results in new scientific discoveries. If one could compare scientifically the conditions of the Himalayas with those of the uplands in other parts of the world, what remarkable similarities and differences would arise!" (Roerich 1990:22).

[48] Saussure sponsored the first ascent and yet himself reached the top of the mountain the next year. During this and later alpine journeys, he conducted scientific research and once published the product in four volumes, *Voyages dans les Alpes* (1779-1796). From mountaineers' perspective, an important matter is to distinguish the climbers' motivations at an alpine journey. The British mountaineer and historian Walt Unsworth observes, "It is fitting that Geneva, cradle of the Reformation and home of Rousseau, should see the birth of mountaineering … The view from the Buet reminded the Genevese scientists that the greatest challenge of the Alps was only a few leagues from their city. It was not a challenge that could

but was that the real purpose?[49] Nineteenth-century Europeans often accused climbers of irresponsible risk-taking—for example, *The Times* (of London) once called alpinists "dilettantes of suicide" (Selters 2004:9). Unlike scientific fieldworkers, mountaineers felt anxiously and imperatively the need to justify their ventures by articulating their goals.

Rationalizing motives for mountain climbing has been one of the major issues for many Western writers in mountaineering history and philosophy. "Because it is there," George Mallory said bluntly in 1921 to the question, "Why do you climb Mt. Everest?" Modernity compels one to provide rationales for any systematized affair. Max Weber observed in northern Europe that, "if we are competent in our pursuit … we can force the individual, or at least we can help him, to give himself an *account of the ultimate meaning of his own conduct*" (Weber 1946 [1922]:152). How could one reason the cause of mountain climbing? "Because Wordsworth and Ruskin opened our eyes," said the Victorian mountaineer Martin Conway (1920:3), rather differently from Mallory. Both Mallory and Conway were impelled to justify rationally their seemingly otherworldly

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go unregarded. Somebody had to climb Mont Blanc" (Unsworth 1994:25). An attempt to climb on Le Buet (3,096m/10,157ft), nearer to Geneva than Mont Blanc, was made—but failed—in 1765 by two sons of a father who was a friend of Rousseau (Unsworth 1994:25), albeit for the purposes of scientific research (Lunn 1957:28). In this period, four figures played prime roles in the first ascent of Mont Blanc: Saussure, the Swiss nature-loving writer Marc Théodore Bourrit (1739-1819), and two from Chamonix, the village doctor Michel-Gabriel Paccard (1757-1827) and the hunter and crystal collector Jacques Balmat (1762-1834). While each of their intentions of climbing the peak was not identical to one another and represented "every motive from pure science to pure greed," the array of undertakings at the achievement presented "all the bravery, doggedness, competitiveness, skill, jealousy, deceit, and publicity that have accompanied the sport of mountaineering" (Unsworth 1994:27). The mismatch of mountaineering inborn even at the very first event of Modern alpinism—for example, Paccard and Balmat had even to have fought each other which led the community of Chamonix divided with respect to the controversial reports on the climbing—seems to be continuing to this day.

[49] Reuben Ellis (2001) calls the burgeoning of Modern mountaineering "new imperialism," a complex network of public behaviors and private motivations peculiar to European modernity. In terms of mountaineering, Ellis argues, the distant ridge line would come into the Western mountaineer's view "as a desacralized, politicized, and commodified space, a high-altitude *terrae incognitae* that tells [them] two

pursuit in that era, providing a "logical or teleological 'consistency'" (Weber 1946:324) for their actions. Indeed, the two mountaineers' justifications express two, often contending, views on mountaineering, respectively: psychologist and historicist. The historicist view in which Conway engaged understands mountaineering as a logical extension of the European Romantic movement, which framed the psychologist claims of someone like Mallory of authenticity throughout form, ethics, attitude, and other experiential dimensions of the sport. Many Victorian mountaineers longed for undertaking spiritually motivated adventures, calling themselves "pilgrim of romance," and sought unexpected learning that would embrace scientific knowledge of nature.[50]

The Romantic ambience in the notion of mountaineering faded away around the turn of the century with a rise of athleticism. From the 1870s, solo and guideless climbing were encouraged among the young, penniless, and intelligent German climbers with popular enthusiasm on the philosophies of Wagner and Nietzsche.[51] The British mountaineer Alfred Mummery (1855-1895) asserted that "the essence of the sport lies, not in ascending a peak, but in struggling with and overcoming difficulties" (Mummery 1946 [1895]:241). An unprecedented discord took place within the British

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things about the world—that it has limits and that those limits are up for grabs" (Ellis 2001:177)

[50] Conway dubbed mountaineering as a modern form of "pilgrim of romance" that is intellectually motivated, saying, "I have never sought to be wise, but always to plunge into the unknown, to get away from the dull round of every day, and go forth as student or adventurer into subjects or regions where it seemed to me at the moment that the unattained might be attainable, the unexperienced might be felt" (Conway 1920:4-5).

[51] Wagner credited a creative power of the Alps after a first performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, which "I conceived in that serene and glorious Switzerland, with my eyes on the beautiful gold-crowned mountains, are masterpieces, and nowhere else could I have conceived them" (MacFarlane 2003:159). Eugen Guido Lammer (1863-1945) and Georg Winkler (1870-1888) were notable figures among the proponents of solo climbing, which was greatly influenced by the Nietzschean purity—"as long as possible should come between the climber and his environment" (Unsworth 1994:104).

mountaineering community: the Conwayesque genteel, exploratory, and Romantic position versus the Mummeryesque somatic, humanistic, and minimalistic position. This clash also reflected class distinctions in European society (Isserman and Weaver 2008:110). Mummery's humanist call for climbing "by fair means" endorsed the contemporary minimalist and environmentalist approach to all kinds of climbing.[52] During the war years, British mountaineers scorned the German unrestrained use of pitons and karabiners on Eiger Nordwand (in the Alps) and Nanga Parbat (in the Himalayas) (Holt 2008; Isserman and Weaver 2008; Taylor 2010).[53]

From the postwar years, western European mountaineer-historians began to define mountaineering in terms of its motivation.[54] T. Graham Brown (1944) and Arnold Lunn (1957; 1963) argued that the epithet of the "Father of Mountaineering" should be ascribed to Father Placidus á Spescha (1752-1833)—instead of de Saussure—a monk of the Benedictine monastery in the Grisons (the republics pre-dating Switzerland). Lunn argued so because of his extraordinary "appetite for mountain problems" (Lunn

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[52] In 1880, Mummery attempted twice in vain for the first ascent of Dent du Géant (4,013m/13,166ft) with his Swiss guide Alexander Burgener (1845-1910). At the highest point he reached, he piled up stones and installed a postcard in it, writing "absolutely inaccessible by fair means" (Braham 2004:184). Steve House and Scott Johnston (2014) credit Paul Preuß (1886-1913) the first person who had trained himself to achieve some of the hardest climbs in the early 1900s. They observe this period as a beginning of "new alpinism."

[53] Some historians accused the interbellum German mountaineers of representing Nazi regime with its hegemonic command. The popular American writer James Ramsey Ullman (1941; 1954) called them "Wagnerian demigods" (Ullman 1954:199) engaging in "all-or-nothing assaults" (Ullman 1941:199). Neale (2002) does similarly from a view of militaristic masculinity. According to the defiant American climber Galen Rowell, however, these are "false rumors" (Rowell 1986:116). The historical contexts under the Weimar polity were never straightforward nor unilateral. Holt (2008) observes the German and Austrian *Alpenverein*, the then largest alpine club in the world, had strategically sought best its place between changing government regimentation and the fluctuating publics. At least in the 1920s the *Bergavabonden* cut loose from increasingly anti-Semitic and authoritarian institutions.

[54] This transition in the first half of the twentieth century may have emerged partly as a response to the post-war ills, envisioning mountains as health-giving, recuperative and restorative sanctuaries for male

1957:27).[55] Mountaineering as a psychological game has been conceived, contested, and redefined in theoretically verifiable terms. Note that the climber's happiness, Lunn points out, would follow the act of climbing instead of its achievement.[56] He also defined the mountaineer as an individual "who climbs, and who continues to climb because he enjoys trying to solve the technical problems of different ascents," distinctively from mountain-traveler, mountain-rambler, mountain-pilgrim, or mountain-scientist (Lunn 1957:27). What it means to "enjoy" trying to solve such climbing problems may be in question, for the sport by definition involves life-threatening risks. I do not attempt here

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body projects (Gilchrist 2013).

[55] Father Placidus once noted his delight on mountain: "My pen cannot convey the enjoyment which was mine on this mountain peak. I could only wish that such wanderings could often be my lot" (Lunn 1963:89). Comparing him to Saussure, Lunn clarifies that what is essential for mountaineering is its motive rather than its practice: "de Saussure alone may be said to have made a regular practice of climbing, but his climbs were all concentrated into a period of only a few years (1776-1792) and his main, perhaps his only, motive appears to have been scientific. Father Placidus, though keenly interested in the scientific aspects of his mountain wanderings, loved the mountains for their own sake and anticipated in many of his reactions not only to mountains but to mountaineering, the attitude of the founding fathers of the Alpine Club" (Lunn 1963:87).

The question "who is the first Modern mountaineer?" is a Modern question—i.e., possibly answerable in accordance to the questioner's definition of Modern. The notion of "for-the-sake-of" mountaineering was absent when Saussure, Father Placidus, and Petrarch (who ascended Mont Ventoux, the highest peak in Province, in 1336 for the first time) went out to climb. A similar question is pending in the Himalayas: who was the first to climb for the sake of getting to the top of a Himalayan peak—the Schlagintweit brothers on Abi Gamin (7,355m/24,131ft) in 1854 or the Gerard brothers on Leo Pargial (22,280ft) in 1817 (or 1818) (Mehta and Kapadia 1990:113; Isserman and Weaver 2008: Ch.1, fn.19; Unsworth 1994: Ch.14)? Arguing for "multiple modernity," Peter Hansen points out the problem in such a seeking-out-the-first question: "The search for beginnings is perhaps a distinguishing feature of modernity. Thus, the perennial rediscovery of beginnings must lead, necessarily, to a multiplicity of modernities" (Hansen 2013:29). "Modernity is," he explains the multiplicity of modernity, "neither a singular and stable entity nor a fixed period of time inaugurated by an act of decision [but] is better understood as a cluster of cultural and political formations that are historical—varying by time and place—and performative" (ibid., 17).

[56] In *Scrambles amongst the Alps* (1871), the Englishman Edward Whymper laid impressive emphasis on the effort rather than the outcome it achieved in the account of his first ascent on the coveted peak, Matterhorn (4,478m/14,692ft). The book "brought more boys to mountains than any other book" (Noyce 1959:145-6). There are different views on that who the first to have popularized mountaineering was. Isserman and Weaver (2008:31) credit the Englishman Albert Smith "the world's first climbing celebrity: 'the man of Mont Blanc'" who, staged show, *The Ascent of Mont Blanc*, "helped displace the romantic and scientific impulses surrounding Alpine travel in favor of the simple urge for adventure" and led "the first

to engage the scholarly discussions on mountaineering psychology (esp. Krein 2007; McNamee 2007; Schöffl V., Morrison, Schwarz, Schöffl I. and Küpper 2010; Thompson 2010; Woodman 2010). I merely suggest that the motivational aspect of each individual climber establishes the core of Western mountaineering. In this psychologist paradigm, Western mountaineers have both practiced and understood their climbs.

Few mountaineers would find it disturbing today if they fail to provide rational reasoning for their intention to climb mountain. The nineteenth century's liberal concept of humanity, which assumed the primacy of rational self-interest, was rejected in the postwar consumerist and progressivist society (Lasch 1979). Instead, the "whole man" (ibid., 224) was acknowledged with his irrational drives and no longer scrutinized out of the Weberian pressure for rationalization.

3.2.2 Western Approach to Himalayan Mountaineering: Hierarchy, Equality, and Anarchy

The psychologist paradigm of mountaineering in the West may be further dissected into a threefold social disposition, as suggested by Sahlins (2008): Thucydidesian hierarchy, Adamsian equality, and Hobbesian anarchy. Sahlins calls this the "Western illusion of human nature" in his book of the same title (ibid.). Westerners' practices of Himalayan mountaineering reveal this variegated aspect more clearly than Alpine climbing. This finding will help to investigate how they have considered Sherpas, the major local population participating in the sport.

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large-scale British invasion of the Alps" in 1854.

The scientific wanderers, many of whom were experienced mountaineers, began to venture into the Himalayas from the mid-nineteenth century.[57] This period also witnessed a series of foundations of mountaineering clubs in European countries. The first was the Alpine Club of Great Britain in 1857. In 1863, the club began to publish the annual, *Alpine Journal*. "With considerable foresight," editors of the journal interpreted the title to include the whole of world mountaineering (Unsworth 1994: Ch.5). In the prewar years, Himalayan expeditions largely comprised British mountaineers mainly from the Alpine Club, often (financially) supported by The Royal Geographic Society and (politically and administratively) by the Viceroy of India. The "historicist" mountaineer Conway set up writing expedition history as a standard practice, describing events in a linear progression. Expeditioners published mountaineering reports in *The Geographical Journal* as well until the 1960s.

The Himalayanists succeeded the trend as well as the style of Alpine climbing. In the Himalayas, they, firstly, endeavored first ascents, next, challenged harder routes, and, finally, inspected climbing styles. The climbing "style" matters—the number of team members, the amount of equipment used, assistances received from external sources, and so on.[58] Climbing sociology and climbing psychology conjoin at climbing ethics: the choice of the "fair" style tells the "proper" motivation.

[57] The first scientific wanderer in the Himalayas was perhaps Joseph Dalton Hooker (1817-1911). He was the closest friend of Darwin. He voyaged and explored high hills in northern India, conducting botanical and partly geological studies from 1847 through 1851.

[58] Mark Kroese interviewed the most accomplished fifty American climbers and said, "[E]lite climbers feel that the style of an ascent is more important than ever" (Kroese 2001:16).

The structure of Western ethics in Himalayan mountaineering may be summarized as this: an anarchic community of equal climbers must commit to the hierarchy revolving on the leader if the expedition aims to achieve its goal. After leading several Himalayan expeditions, Chris Bonington, the "aristo-military imperial adventurer" (Gilchrist 2008), concludes that "the essence of climbing is teamwork" (Bonington 1988[1986]:454). Indeed, his expedition memoirs are full of organizing struggles and conflicts among his expedition members, many of whom "tend to be an individualistic lot, with powerful egos and anti-authoritarian attitudes" (Bonington 1988:458). Richard M. Emerson, a sociologist and mountaineer, conducted a study, "Communication and Goal Striving" (1966), by participating in the 1963 American Mount Everest Expedition. In the article, he discusses the relationship between the group goal and the individual motivation and effort, arguing the latter induced for the former is "the function of uncertainty about goal outcome" (Emerson 1966:213). The research question rightly tackled a significant issue among the expedition members. The would-be-summiteer, Thomas Hornbein, questioned to other members in the early stage of the expedition: "How do you reconcile the personal ambitions of nineteen climbers with the notion of a group goal which if achieved by some is thereby achieved by all?" (Hornbein 1998[1965]:53).

"Alpine-style climbing,"[59] a strictly defined minimalist style of Himalayan climbing, was a big calling from the 1970s onward.[60] Often referred to as the "evolution

[59] The alpine style climbing avoids to employ a fixed rope, fixed camps, stocked gear cache, reconnaissance of the planned climb route, and Sherpa or high-altitude porter assistance. The so-called "lightweight style" would use some of these tactics in a limited scale (Child 1995:9).

of climbing," this and other transitions in the style of Himalayan mountaineering are considered inevitable by most Western mountaineers. For around three decades after the war years, a few world-famous mountaineers came into conflict with expedition members and abhorred the concept of massive expedition.[61] The cases include Walter Bonatti's 1953 Italian K2 Expedition, Hermann Buhl's 1953 and Reinhold Messner's 1960 German-Austrian Nanga Parbat Expeditions, and John Roskelly and Rick Ridgeway's 1978 American K2 Expedition, among many others. These anecdotes have been retold, criticized, fought, law-suited, and analyzed, in and outside the expeditions, to lead later generations to conclude that they may climb a Himalayan peak aesthetically and ethically best when employing the alpine style. The Polish Voytek Kurtyka, well-known with his alpine-style climbs in the 1980s, said, "I felt totally alien to the idea of a big team, with distributed functions and jobs … I like to be in more intimate conditions with nature. So being with a big team with logistics and tactics spoils everything" (O'Connell 1993:171). For Western climbers, this "evolution of climbing" was deemed as a "more of an art form and less of a conquest" (Cordes 2014:63). In this rise of the alpine style climbing, the "siege tactics" was condemned as nationalistic, communistic, and militaristic. The American Steve House's (2004) epigram, "the simpler you make things, the richer the experience of alpinism becomes," catches the contemporary mountaineering ethics that favors psychologist, individualist, and environmentalist standpoints.

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[60] In 1975, the climbing world was stunned by the Messner's climbing to the top of Gasherbrum I (8,068m/26,470ft) with Peter Habeler in the "pure alpine style," or *Westalpenstil* [the style of the western Alps] as Hermann Buhl once called it in 1956 (Isserman and Weaver 2008:331).

[61] The antipathy against big-size mountaineering expeditions may trace up to Mark Twain's travelogue, *A Tramp Abroad* (1853). In the book, Twain parodies the "last and grandest" (Unsworth 1994:59) of the big expeditions to attempt Mont Blanc, an expedition organized by four Englishmen and assisted by thirty-six

Today, what could be called the approach of "hyper individualism" is widely acclaimed in the discourse of Western mountaineering. One may find numerous phrases in the discourse, such as Walter Bonatti's saying, "It's necessary to listen to one's own impulses [that] are from my inner self and not from the outside world" (O'Connell 1993:85).[62] Himalayan peaks, especially over eight thousand meters (26,247ft), are referred to as "death zone" by Messner. According to him, the death zone is where one may truly find his or her inner voice: "If the man on the limit of his power and abilities will be charged or inevitably plunges to his death, he reacts with more energy than in any other emergency situation; by being in this 'death zone' as a living human, he acknowledges and accepts intuitively what he is" (Messner 1978:29). He calls this experience of exceptional vitality "enormous enhancement of life" (*enormen steigerung des lebens*, Messner 1978:51).

The historicist view contends with this individualist paradigm. Calling Messner "a supreme individualist," Maurice Isserman and Stewart Weaver (2008:431) lament the good old days, such as the 1952 American K2 expedition, when expeditioners bore the "strong sense of fellowship and responsibility to others in the pursuit of common goals in the face of danger" (ibid., xi). They also accuse the "poisonous rivalry" (ibid., 335) characteristic to a number of outstanding Himalayanists. Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* (1997), a castigation of the commercial culture of mountaineering based on the 1996 tragedy on Mt. Everest, championed the cause of the lost fellowship and sense of

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guides and porters.

[62] Similarly, the Swiss mountaineer Edhard Loretan said in 1986, "Try to listen to and to understand your body systems" (Kurtyka 1988:36).

community. Often phrased as the "rope of brotherhood," the idea of an ideal community of expedition persists in the Western idea of Himalayan mountaineering. Whether "brothers" or hyper individualist, Western mountaineers have climbed the Himalayas and understand the climbs exhibiting the eurocentric dispositions of hierarchy, equality, and anarchy.

3.3 Anthromanticism: The Sherpa as a Local Mind, Body, and Community

Ever since Western mountaineers explored the Himalayas, encounters with the local populace were patterned. From the first decade of the twentieth century, the Sherpa have always been the major local population participating in mountaineering expeditions across the Himalayas. This section examines the epistemological aspect of the ways in which the Western visitors encountered the Sherpa. The recurring eurocentric epistemology presumes that the Sherpa are a conglomeration of the local mind, body, and community and are best understood by psychology, physiology, and sociology. I propose to call this attitude anthromanticism, meaning a Romantic assumption of human nature found outside the West.

Most historians agree that the prewar quests targeting the highest summits were a form of recreation, sport, and fellowship that were largely derived from, supported by, and conjunctive to the British imperialist civilizing mission (Ellis 2001; Isserman and Weaver 2008; Hansen 1996; 1997; 2000; Mitchell and Rodway 2011; Ortner 1999). In this early period of Himalayan exploration, for political reasons most European explorations were focused on Karakoram, Kashmir, and Garhwal in the west, and Sikkim

in the east.[63] From the late nineteenth century, close encounters began to take place between European explorers and local populations in the form of labor contract for expedition progression. Until then, Swiss alpine guides customarily accompanied the Himalayanists; however, they soon turned out to be inefficient on the Himalayan glaciers. Instead, native support in climbing Himalayan peaks was initiated in 1891 when the General Charles Bruce, recognizing their potential value as climbers and guides, persuaded Conway to attach four Gurkha soldiers of his regiment to the Karakoram expedition (Isserman and Weaver 2008:39).[64] At the turn of the century, many hill tribes, including Sherpas in Khumbu, were migrating eastwards along the Himalayas because of the promising economic opportunities in colonial northeastern India (Gellner 1992:15; Ortner 1989:101-5).

The name "Sherpa" was first reported at the 1908 gathering of the Alpine Club in London by two Norwegian mountaineers. They climbed Kabru (7,412m/24,318ft) in Sikkim (Eastern) Himalaya, hiring an unprecedented number (one hundred) of local people as porters, including several Darjeeling Sherpas. The Norwegians acclaimed the Sherpas as "very keen," "interested," courageous, with "many other good qualities," and

[63] The Westerners were officially allowable to enter through the British India. It was hard for them to enter Nepal or Tibet except a few reported clandestine sneaks for then scientific purposes like mapping or climbing. Nepal did not open its door the foreigners until the fall of xenophobic Rana regime in 1950. Tibet, on the other hand, in the midst of political turmoil between the colonial Britain and China, had allowed a number of times British Everest expeditions trek into its territory. Francis Younghusband was a symbolic figure in this context showing the Victorian irony on mountaineering: as a spiritual mountaineering writer and the President of Royal Geographical Society, he wrote a number of articles and book prefaces that would assert mountaineering that "elevates human spirit," while as a British commissioner in Tibet he led a troop to Lhasa in 1903-4 which caused five hundred Tibetans at the cost of five British casualties.

[64] This 1891 Conway's Karakoram expedition set up several significant standards in terms of methods and processes of Himalayan mountaineering expeditions. They include receiving native support of climbing,

the "most plucky" among the local workers (Rubenson 1908:321).[65] In this Western characterization of the Sherpa, an instrumental standpoint was developed. In other words, they became known as good mountain laborers. An important figure was the Scottish chemist and mountaineer Alexander Kellas (1868-1921), "the pioneer of mountaineering high altitude physiology" (Mitchell and Rodway 2011:211).[66] Throughout his consecutive expeditions in the prewar years, his scientific eyes applauded Sherpas, among other local porters and Gurkhas, and recognized their virtues in sociability, physical strength, and adaptability at high altitude. Following the examples set by the Norwegians and Kellas, the Western mountaineers discovered and characterized the Sherpa as espousing instrumental virtues for mountaineering, including cheerfulness, sociability, bravery, physical strength, and high-altitude adaptability, which were sought

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securing sponsorship from local government, contracting exclusive press reports, accompanying an expedition artist, and writing expedition history (Isserman and Weaver 2008:44).

[65] At the meeting one of the Norwegian C. W. Rubenson described Sherpa, saying, "Another thing in which our experiences differed from those of most other mountaineers who have been in this part of the world was in regard to the usefulness of the natives on such expeditions. We found them very keen and interested people. It is only to their courage and many other good qualities that we owe our success so far. … One must always remember that they have no personal interest in the success of the expedition. The natives whom we found most plucky were Nepali Tibetans, the so-called Sherpahs" (Rubenson 1908:320-1). The 1907 Norwegian Kabru expedition was probably the first-ever mountaineering expedition that hired a large number of local people, differently from previous relatively small-sized expeditions of so-called "rush-tactics." Therefore, this "discovery" of the Sherpa in their usefulness in mountaineering might be said to have taken place with the birth of massive Himalayan mountaineering, in which now the Sherpa play major roles. About fifteen years later, they were more formerly acclaimed as "the hardest men of all" among the hired local porters in the early Mt. Everest expeditions (Morris 1923:166).

[66] Isserman and Weaver note that it was "because of his particular scientific background" that made Kellas the "first to think systematically and seriously about the effects of high altitude and diminished atmospheric pressure on human physiology" (Isserman and Weaver 2008:78). While he was suddenly died on the way to Mt. Everest as a member of the first British Mt. Everest Reconnaissance Expedition in 1921, Noel also argued that "if he had not died, Everest would have been conquered by now, and by nothing other than this—the combination of Kellas' Himalayan knowledge and Mallory's dash" (Noel 1927:111).

after in the context of the newly booming Himalayan mountaineering.[67] Further, the Sherpa were idealized with the values of mountaineering, values such as purity, authenticity, and transcendence (Isserman and Weaver 2008:384).

The Western visitors employed the eurocentric duality of Enlightenment and Romanticism when they viewed the Sherpa. On the one hand, they took good care not to disturb frail local livelihood with massive travels. On the other, they regarded it as uncivilized when the hired Sherpas were indifferent to sporting peaks. For the Europeans, mountains were an untamed-yet-coveted nature while the city life was a harmful-yet-genuine culture (Isserman and Weaver 2008). The Sherpa was considered representative of the former. Western visitors felt regret when returning from "this happy primitive land" (Houston 1951:21) while leaving Sherpas "in their natural state" (Tilman 1952:210).

It was mountaineers who eagerly wished for and initiated the series of ethnological study of the Sherpa. Nepal opened its door to the outer world in 1950, and thus the Himalayan veteran H. W. "Bill" Tilman was thrilled to be one of the first European visitors to Namche Bazar—one of the main villages in the Khumbu region—which he called "my humble Mecca" (Tilman 1952:223). The mountaineer Norman Hardie conducted impressive quasi-ethnographic research on Sherpa cultural life in 1955 and published a monograph (Hardie 1957). After the completion of his 1954

[67] Early European Himalayanists eagerly looked for best-fit high-altitude porters. Conway noted the need: "The Gurkhas are admirable scramblers and good weight-carriers, but they were not experienced in the craft of climbing snow-mountains" (Conway 1895:5). At the Evening Meeting of Royal Geographic Society on June 18 of 1923, Captain C. J. Morris summarized the virtues of the Sherpa high-porters and their essential assistance for the early British Everesters: "They are the hardest men of all, and provided us with the porters who did such magnificent work on Mount Everest, and without whose labours very little

expedition, he stayed for five weeks around Khumbu. There, he was "so impressed by my taste of village life, and so fascinated by the customs and beliefs of the local people, that I determined to return leading a private expedition with the dual purpose of surveying the intricate network of valleys in the vicinity, and making a study of the inhabitants (Hardie 1957:12). He saw no conflict in between his "dual purposes"—geographical exploration and ethnographic research.

Mountaineers have never been isolated from the wider society. The same was true of their discourses, including their attraction for the Sherpa. The British mountaineer Tom Bourdillon climbed Cho Oyu (8,201m/26,906ft) near Mt. Everest in 1952. His wife, Jennifer Bourdillon, traveled with him to the Khumbu region in order to witness "mysteries of Sherpa manners" (Bourdillon 1956:12). She stayed there over two months. Returning from this "research trip," she published a manuscript on what she observed. Her fieldwork was followed the next year by the Austrian-British ethnologist Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf (1955; on Sherpa religion) and with his own consecutive visits and those of numerous others, resulting in the current extensive array of ethnological scholarship on the Sherpa.[68]

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would have been accomplished" (Morris 1923:166).

[68] Gurung and Bhattachan (2006) have compiled the ethnological publications on Sherpa published until 2005 including monographs, scholarly articles, doctoral dissertations and master theses and counted their number as 151. By 1949, three were published; by 1974, forty; by 1999, one hundred three; by 2005, four; and, no date, one. As they compile publications for all and each indigenous nationalities (N. *Janajati*), it is interesting to note a set of patterns appear. Publications on some groups, notably Gurung, Chepang or Kumal, increased after 2000 while others, notably Newar and Sherpa, decreased.

Throughout this series of burgeoning interests in the Sherpa, a common epistemological penchant kept operating while a contrast became increasingly obvious among the viewpoints. The exclusive interest in the Sherpa has initiated an ethnological thinking as opposed to mountaineering thinking. This schismogenesis in epistemological pursuits is illustrated by the following anecdote, noted by British Eric Shipton detailing the 1951 Mount Everest Reconnaissance Expedition and further reinterpreted by scholarly interpretations of it. Shipton writes,

> As we climbed into the valley we saw at its head the line of the main watershed. I recognized immediately the peaks and saddles so familiar to us from the Rongbuk side: Pumori, Lingtren, the Lho La, the North Peak and the west shoulder of Everest. It is curious that Angtharkay, who knew these features as well as I did from the other side and had spent many years of his boyhood grazing yaks in this valley, had never recognized them as the same; nor did he do so now until I pointed them out to him. This is a striking example of how little *interest* Asiatic mountain peasants take in the peaks and ranges around them (Shipton 1985[1951]:610; italics mine).

For Shipton, like most experienced mountaineers, identifying individual peaks from their outlook constituted a basic aspect of mountaineering. He took into account the Sherpa's perceptive habit in terms of the "interest" paid to the landscape. In his scheme, "interest" is a universal condition; the Sherpa took little of it. This documented ethnic characteristic ("Asiatic mountain peasants") is further considered in theorization of human symbolic and cognitive capacity. The Linguist Max Oppenheimer Jr. applied it to illustrate the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. For Angtharkay, he argued, "the mountain goes by different names in different places … to the Sherpa each face is a separate picture, a

separate mountain" (Oppenheimer 1961:64). Similarly, the Polish-British scientist Jacob Bronowski developed the notion of "map of things" thus:

> It is the inquisitive stranger [i.e. Shipton] who points out the mountains which flank Everest. The Sherpa then recognizes the shape of a peak here and of another there. The parts begin to fit together; the puzzled man's mind begins to build a map; and suddenly the pieces are snug, the map will turn around, and the two faces of the mountain are both Everest. … By making such connections we find in our experiences the *maps* of things (Bronowski 1956:40-1; italics mine).

A contrast is notable between understandings of the mountaineer Shipton and of the scholars Oppenheimer and Bronowski. To the Sherpa climber's behavior, the mountaineer focused on the lack of talent while the scholars were interested in a sort of universal mental function. The former aims to aid in mountaineering, the latter wished to advance human science. This differentiation takes place on a shared epistemological ground in which the Sherpa has a certain kind of "mind," a kind that may fully account for the Sherpa's behavior in the face of the landscape. The kind of mind is equated with an authority that is solely responsible to one's visible, bodily, and social behaviors, regardless of the other's presence or the environment. A "mind," in Western presupposition, exists independently of the "body" and other "minds."

Finally, the Sherpas became an object of physiological study as well. Beall and Goldstein (1987) argued that their extraordinary exercise ability in hypoxic circumstances may be due to their different patterns of high-altitude adaptation, a somatic characteristic contrasted to the Andean highlanders. Following their suggestion, a number of physiological studies were conducted regarding their bodily capacity: general physiology

(Apte and Rao 2005; Beall et al 1997; Chen et al 1997; Droma et al 1991; Samaja et al 1997; Sun et al 1990; Weitz and Garruto 2007; Wood et al 2003; Wu and Kayser 2006), exercise physiology (Santolaya et al 1989), evolutionary physiology (Beall 2001; 2007; Brutsaert et al 2005; Storz 2010), psychoneurology (Garrido et al 1996), and, more recently, genetics (Beall 2007; 2010; Brutsaert 2001; Julian et al 2009; Lorenzo et al 2014; Simonson et al 2010; Wills 2011; Yi et al 2010), among others. The Sherpa's extraordinary physiological capacity, scientifically granted, has offered a rationale that justifies Sherpa's exclusive participation in Himalayan mountaineering.[69] "The natural ability to adapt in high altitude when combined with training," a Nepali journalist argued, "makes them able to perform difficult tasks like putting up ropes, setting up camps, and other exertion-related work better at high altitude areas ... No wonder the Sherpas are agile in helping people whether it is for guiding or rescue operations in the Himalayas" (Basnyat 2014). Similarly, CNN wrote an article on, "The biological secrets that make Sherpas superhuman mountaineers" (Senthilingam 2015). Like psychology, physiology alone provides one of the frameworks in which the Sherpa would be understood as a set of ideas. In particular, physiological understandings of the Sherpa have often been applied to justify or endorse the Sherpa's exclusive participation in Himalayan mountaineering.

Like psychology and physiology, a sociological understanding has been one of the key epistemological frameworks in which Western mountaineers, scholars, journalists,

[69] Briefly, the Sherpas do not exhibit increased hemoglobin concentration in high altitude and instead utilize a more efficient mechanism. The physiological mutation took place in a period of eight thousand years, which is quite short from the evolutionary standard.

and the public have frequently grappled with issues of the Sherpa. A simple economic logic attracts many to define the relationship between foreign mountaineers and the Sherpa. It also provides a rationale for the transformation of the local culture.

To the eyes of Western mountaineers, the custom of Sherpa guiding in the Himalayas more or less replicates the historical pattern of European modernity. For them, it is Western visitors who may either mar the local culture or rescue them from the harms of the encroaching Westernization. At the height of this eurocentric cosmopolitanism was when Moro, after the brawl on Mt. Everest, said to National Geographic,

> I could send a lot of people to prison. But I decided to show to everybody that I don't hate anybody, and I don't want to destroy the life of any young stupid Sherpa ... Without foreigners, there are no jobs for Sherpas. This concept is too often forgotten." (Miller 2013)

It was a benevolent gesture for him not to report the case because he thought he rightfully recognized the obscure reality of the Himalayan economy. On the other hand, historians would criticize elite mountaineers on account of media publicity and commercial relationships. Taylor (2010:175) accuses "the most zealous purists" of being the most responsible to the entrepreneurizing and developing trekking industry in the Himalayas.[70]

[70] The first organized tour trip in Nepal took place in 1955 when the British travel agency Thos. Cook & Son brought a party by plane from Calcutta to Kathmandu. They and other followers ended up their tours meandering in the vicinity of the capital. In 1965, the country saw the first guided hiking group travelling Khumbu. It was organized by Jim Lester and Jimmy Roberts, participants of the 1963 American Everest Expedition. According to Isserman and Weaver, the choice of the word *trekking* was meant "to describe a guided hiking trip, with its suggestion of genuine adventure radically different from the soft and inauthentic experiences associated with mere tourism, [and] was a stroke of marketing genius on the part of Roberts and his imitators" (Isserman and Weaver 2008:381). From 1964 to 1974, the number of foreign tourists jumped ninefold to ninety thousand, and seventy trekking agencies were registered for business in Nepal. As of 2013, registered trekking agencies in Nepal counted 1,636 (Tourism Industry Division



Figure 3-2. The Sherpas' support. A client climber is assisted by two Sherpa climbers when she crosses over a crevasse in the midway between Camp One and Camp Two on Mt. Everest. May 2, 2012. Photo by the author.

"The loudest critics of publicity" like Messner are also the "most published writers" (Taylor 2010:182). Isserman and Weaver regard the commercialized cultural landscape of Khumbu as, in a sense, a necessary outcome of homogenizing Western consumer culture, saying, "Even the hardiest of trekkers, after all, might want to stop for a cold soda after a long day's hike, as enterprising Nepali villagers were quick to realize" (Isserman and Weaver 2008:382). Here, I do not rebut their contentions; some of them indeed need urgent academic and administrative attentions, as the economic conditions and inequality in the country are generally poor and not deservedly accounted for. I

2013).

merely suggest that the economic and sociological framework is now one of the most common epistemological bases for Western understanding of the Sherpa.

I would further suggest that these epistemological bases are uniformly applied when Western mountaineers attempt to understand mountaineering practices of those who are not Sherpa. Today, many people believe that those who hire Sherpas to climb Mt. Everest are in general inexperienced. Taking the 2014 avalanche accident on Mt. Everest for example, Messner devalued the popularized form of guided Himalayan mountaineering, asserting that it is not a "real mountaineering." He said,

> Earlier this year, five hundred Sherpas were preparing Mountain Everest so that thousands of clients could pay a lot of money to climb the mountain. Then there was an accident and 16 Sherpas died in an avalanche. It was like a type of industrial accident, I suppose you could say. There were strikes and the tourists went home. But next year they will come again. I hope that everyone can have the chance to climb these mountains, but what is going on here has little to do with real mountaineering. It is tourism—sure it's hard work and it's a bit dangerous—but the responsibility for the safety of the climb is being pushed onto the locals. This is all about showing off what you have done, and nothing to do with your experience of nature (Nestler 2014).

In this popular scheme, mountaineering becomes "real" and authentic when a mountaineer is responsible for his or her own safety during climbing; it becomes truly "real" if they are solely responsible. Because now Everest climbers hire Sherpas as their guides, however, they are considered "tourists" with egotistic motives. Messner further implied the Everest "tourism" to be responsible for the "industrial" accident. The structure of this reasoning is twofold: mountaineers' motivation and mountaineering economy. Because they are egotistic, they hire the locals and may harm the local culture;

because they pay money, the locals are instead exposed to the risk. Psychological and sociological approaches jointly help to make mountaineering criticisms that may well attract the public in the West.

None of these views tells how the local people would consider regarding the commercialism on the mountain. Moreover, Sherpas' understandings of those issues drastically differ from the Western understandings. I will examine some of these differences in the next section. What is clear so far is that the forms of Western understanding of the Sherpa draw from the anthromantic assumption of human nature, which regard the Sherpa as, just like the Westerners, a conglomeration of the local mind, body, and community. The best method to investigate the local population therefore becomes psychology, physiology, and sociology. The epistemology the Westerners are immersed in in their own everyday lives is brought to use when they venture around the Himalayas, uniformly and thus eurocentrically.

3.4 A Genealogy of Eurocentric Respect for the Sherpa

From the first decade of the twentieth century, numerous writers have commented on the Sherpa and their participation in Himalayan mountaineering.[71] Many

[71] In Europe, mountain climbing meant to accompany a guide until young Germans in the 1870s cultivated what was soon to be called "guideless climbing." Even so, both guided and guideless styles of climbing kept being practiced by experienced mountaineers for decades. In the early period, receiving Sherpa assistance in Himalayan mountaineering passed without a strong dissent. From the 1920s onward, the Sherpas were allowed not to carry loads before the march reached the foot of the aimed mountain. For the communication's sake, moreover, hired Sherpas formed a separate team within an expedition and sirdar (Sherpa team leader) was often appointed prior to the arrival of foreign mountaineers, taking organizational and load-carrying responsibilities in mountaineering chores. In the 1939 American K2 Expedition, the summit-bid party firstly ever included a Sherpa high-porter to the grunting jealousy from other Americans. (There are different views about this jealousy due to an unclear note of a member, and

mountaineers and journalists have been condemning the commercialization of tourism across the Himalayas in the last few decades, often bluntly chastising some Sherpa guides and outfitters. Sociocultural anthropologists, on the other hand, tend to criticize the romanticizing of the locals and investigate the underlying unequal relationships. Despite their antithetical viewpoints, in this section I suggest that most Western mountaineers and critics share an anthromantic appreciation of the Sherpa. In other words, like the Westerners the local participants in Himalayan mountaineering are considered to consist of the basic human binary of the "mind" and the "body," a multiplication of which forms a "community." I further suggest that, since the two viewpoints constitute the major Western understanding of the Sherpa, the Sherpa have been known to the Western world at large as a sort of "pseudo-Western" population. Furthermore, for some considerate mountaineers and egalitarian anthropologists, the Sherpa are considered not merely pseudo-Western, but "westernizable," to borrow Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (1995:76) phrase.

The first anthropologist who argued for "true respect" in relation to the Sherpa was Robert Miller. He also pioneered an anthropology of Sherpa mountaineers, focusing on the Sherpas in Darjeeling in northeastern India.[72] His discussion partly relies on *Man*

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here I follow Isserman and Weaver [2008:218-9] as opposed to Kauffman and Putnam [1992].) In the 1954 Austrian Cho Oyu Expedition, a Western climber (Herbert Tichy) was guided for the first time on an eight-thousand-meter peak in mountaineering decisions by a Sherpa (Pasang), completing the successful first ascent of the peak.

[72] In "High Altitude Mountaineering, Cash Economy, and the Sherpa" (1965), Miller questions "particular Sherpa success in and affinity for mountaineering" (ibid., 249) instead of Sherpa culture change per se. He asked, "Why did this group of Tibetan-derived inhabitants of the Himalayan foothills become the virtually uncontested mainstay of Himalayan expeditions? And what effect has this specialization on portering, now practically synonomous [*sic*] with the term Sherpa, had upon the Sherpa way of life?" (ibid., 244) He identifies two conditions for the Darjeeling Sherpas to participate in Himalayan mountaineering

of Everest: The Autobiography of Tenzing (1956) by the American writer James Ramsey Ullman. As a member of the 1953 British Everest expedition, Tenzing Norgay Sherpa reached the top of Mt. Everest with Edmund Hillary for the first time. The book describes Tenzing's preference for members of the 1952 Swiss Everest expedition over the British climbers of 1953.[73] Miller argues that the friendship formed between the Swiss mountaineers and Tenzing was "real comradeship." He also envisions that a fuller anthropological understanding would better the "real" friendship with the locals and finally help attain a sort of egalitarian anthropology, avoiding orientalist penchants.[74] He noted,

> Perhaps some of the difficulties which certain English climbers encountered with the Sherpa is related to their lack of understanding of Sherpa attitudes. The Sherpa was not servile, and tended to take on a job out of interest, loyalty, a sense of comradeship, perhaps even of adventure. … The British have liked the Sherpa, but have resisted the idea that Sherpa porters might be treated as equal participants in the climb, with opportunities to take part in the actual ascents. (Miller 1965:248)

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expeditions: 1) competition with other Tibetan highlanders for the remunerative employment and 2) prestige, such as the Tiger badge expressed willingness to serve. He also observed an "anti-Sherpa undercurrent" from some Western climbers against a sort of ascendant demeanor among Darjeeling Sherpas after the first ascent of Mt. Everest in 1953. Tactics of the undercurrent included training non-Sherpa locals for high-altitude porters and hiring Khumbu Sherpas instead of Darjeeling Sherpas. According to him, this change of Sherpa manner is partly due to the Western influence on Sherpa lifestyle. The changed manners include "tastes, skills and needs [that] have been created through mountaineering, and only mountaineering can continue to satisfy them, while the Sherpa is unable to maintain a realistic perspective on the whole process" (ibid., 248).

[73] Tenzing narrated to Ullman: "With the Swiss and the French I had been treated as a comrade, an equal, in a way that is not possible for the British. They are kind men; they are brave; they are fair and just, always. But always, too, there is a line between them and the outsiders, between sahibs and employee, and to such Easterners as we Sherpas, who have experienced the world of 'no line,' this can be a difficulty and a problem" (Ullman 1956:221).

[74] Miller avowed a "new approach" with the founding members of Department of Indian Studies (currently Department of South Asian Studies) at University of Wisconsin in 1960-61: "[W]e agreed, we *did not want to be an 'Orientalist' department*, but wanted an *integration* of historical and social science approaches to any and all aspects of 'Indian Studies'" (Elder 1995).

This kind of egalitarian anthropology dealing with the Sherpa-visitor relationship initiated by Miller was succeeded by a number of anthropologists, including Adams (1996; 1997), Brower (1991), and Fisher (1986; 1990), and culminated by Ortner (1997; 1999). Here, I focus on Ortner's egalitarian program and discuss its theoretical and epistemological facets. I argue that the egalitarianism she posits in her study of the Sherpa-foreigner relationship may be a reflection of her own American perspective rather than the Sherpa notion of equality. In *Life and Death on Mount Everest* (1999), she postulates in most intercultural encounters a fundamental social framework of "asymmetries of powers" (Ortner 1999:18). To theorize the asymmetrical and intercultural relationships, she relies on Gayatri Spivak's (1988) scheme. "The subaltern cannot speak," Spivak argues against the bourgeois and totalizing concepts of power suggested by Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. She characterizes their conceptualizations of power as "epistemic violence" and instead suggests a Marxist duplex structure. The duplex structure refers to the duality of "proxy" (micrological; gender or other cultural patterns) and "portrait" (macrological; class structure). Spivak maintains that this structure is embedded in all kinds of intellectual and political representation. Thus, Ortner's analytic strategy for egalitarian anthropology is to critically examine two interlinked dimensions: cultural (interpersonal) patterns and the class struggle. By doing so, she aims to reveal the Sherpa's "own structures of intentionality, their own projects in life, and their own ways of enacting those projects" in a "relatively classic ethnographic way" (Ortner 1999:20, 147).

It seems, however, that both her theoretical postulate and presuppositions about human capacity are derived less from "Sherpas themselves" but more from the anthropologist's own point of view. Reviewing historical texts and folkloric traditions in Khumbu, Ortner argues that the Sherpa society is grounded on an essential contradiction between an "egalitarian" and a "hierarchical" ethic. The contradiction is, according to her, manifested in economic terms by what she calls "fraternal conflict": at once hierarchical in the natural superiority of elder over younger and egalitarian in the rule of (ideally) equal inheritance (Ortner 1989:33). In particular, Sherpa egalitarianism is, she argues, "very much like the American variety, in the sense that it is an egalitarianism of opportunity" (ibid.). The Sherpa, in her conception, are "naturally" equal: "There are no status differences given by birth, and every individual in principle has the possibility of achieving whatever forms of success are available, to whatever level he is able to achieve" (ibid., 33). To this ideal egalitarianism, the Sherpa age hierarchy (seniority) is therefore an obstacle that causes a troubling contradiction, constituting the Lévi-Straussian core structure of the Sherpa culture. Because of this culturally fundamental contradiction, the Sherpas collectively participate in simultaneously competitive and collaborative practices, such as the foundation of a temple. She calls this recurring pattern "cultural schema."

Her scheme of Sherpa culture, identifying Sherpa notions of competition and collaboration as egalitarianism and hierarchy, is academically eurocentric. This speculation of duality is hardly observable in actual lives. Her assumption, "*unrelated* men are equal," remains purely hypothetical insofar as no single Sherpa would consider

an unknown Sherpa absolutely unrelated with him or herself, by virtue of multiple modes of identification and dynamic practices of belonging (§6.2). Moreover, as one of the major social and ethical principles practiced nationwide, the rule of seniority, in essence, hardly conflicts with egalitarianism. On the contrary, it is probably the most democratic way of determining roles of authority, since, as Gellner points out, "each member has only to wait (and live) to fill them" (1992:248). Although there can be a considerable extent of patterned competition between individuals—for that matter, I discuss Sherpa "individualist collectivism" in the following chapters (§6.5, §7.4)—the principles of equality and hierarchy seem in no way contradictory to one another. In fact, practices of anti-hierarchical and American-kind egalitarianism have never been reportedly observed among the Sherpas. Egalitarianism has been popularly imagined when taking into account the widespread practices of Mahayana Buddhism, of which Tibetan Buddhism is a variation. This is a modernist innovation; as Gellner (1992:100) argues, spiritual hierarchy is built into Buddhism from the time of the Buddha himself (i.e. generosity or alms-giving being lowly, morality or practice of good being middling, and tranquility or meditation being advanced). Within the egalitarian program of anthropology, the Sherpa culture, with its positive and negative dimensions, is understood as being dissected into an American ideal and a local impediment.

In this scheme, Sherpas may not convey their own voice due to culturally patterned unequal social (economic) relationships; by disclosing the hidden inequality, anthropologists are considered to help render them "simply as real people" (Ortner 1999:24). "An accurate recognition of a Sherpa point of view," according to Ortner, was

exemplified by Bonington's 1976 observation "that the Sherpas climbed for money rather than for love of sahibs or of mountains" (1999:209).[75] Like *the* mountaineering question in the West, the Sherpas' mountaineering participation becomes a psychological and sociological inquiry questioning their motives and societal relationships in the sport. An anthropological study on Sherpa mountaineering may be ethically justified in this academic eurocentrism and the following eurocentric cosmopolitanism.[76]

Ortner's vision for a cosmopolitan justice is reflected in the common moral claims at international encounters. The phrase "respect for local customs" became a maxim in the lines of successive ethical codes declared in the mountaineering communities in the West.[77] If a mountain is venerated by the locals, for example, it ought not to be ascended. Eager mountaineers might stop their ascending just below the exact apex as a compromise, such as the two British climbers in 1955 who stopped ascending five

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[75] Serious Himalayan mountaineers of all time, however, seemed plainly aware of the practical motives with which Sherpas joined their enterprises. A wage negotiation has constantly been a keen matter. From the 1930s onward, Sherpa strikes during expeditions took place not infrequently. Most visiting mountaineers could not help but to raise payments.

[76] According to Nisbet (1982), American egalitarianism requires individuals being isolated by leveling cultural curves such as kinship, tradition, religion, or social hierarchy and thus ironically seeks to strengthen the sense of fraternity that in fact it greatly diminishes. In other words, egalitarianism, popularly advocated by some mountaineers and scholarly commentators instead of Sherpas, both alienates and romanticizes camaraderie in their encounters with the locals. This celebration of Western egalitarian ideal seeking the lost fellowship has been publicly sought after with vigor from the 1960s, such as John F. Kennedy's impromptu humble reception of the holy scarf on his neck placed by Nawang Gombu, one of the five invited Sherpa climbers in the 1963 American Everest Expedition.

[77] Founded in 1932, the International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) published a series of ethical declarations regarding mountaineers' relationship with local populations. Adopted in 1982, the Kathmandu Declaration on Mountain Activities includes an article: "The cultural heritage and the dignity of the local population are inviolable." In 1987, the Ethical Code Principles and Practice for Expeditions includes statements: "Respect the regulations of the host country," and "Whatever tactic and strategy are adopted, behave in a way which preserves the safety of all, especially valley porters, HA [High Altitude] porters, expedition members, etc. from the host country." In the International Year of Mountains in 2002, for the "full contribution to the sustainable mountain objectives," the UIAA Summit Charter 2002 declared that mountaineering, climbing, and trekking "may be a major economic resource for mountain

vertical feet from the summit of the locally revered Kangchenjunga (8,586m/28,169ft) enough to claim the first ascent of the mountain. This anecdote has been widely referred to as an example of the "respect for local customs." Before the introduction of mountaineering in the country, however, few of the Tibetan highlanders had conceptualized Western mountaineers' ideas of a "summit," of mountain hierarchy in accordance to height, and of desecrating mountain god by means of stepping on the apex and thus "conquering" it. I do not mean that Sherpas and other mountainous populations still do not intellectualize these forms of Western man-and-mountain relationship. Khumbu Sherpas began to forbid foreigners from ascending Khumbila (5,761m/18,901ft), the most sacred mountain in Khumbu, at least after 1952 when a group of Western climbers attempted it with no local disapproval.[78] Transformation of customs, such as this change of a rule and the use of mountaineering vocabulary, is a local response to global influx and yet should not be confused with a transformation of their sense of respect. It seems easier for visitors to question what the local customs are than what "respect" would locally mean.

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communities," so that the members of the UIAA ought to seek "economic benefits principally for local communities."

[78] There has been a voice among the Nepali communities to attach an aluminum ladder on the steep Hillary Step, like that of the Second Step (28,200ft) on the normal route of the Chinese side, as the former frequently caused perilous bottleneck including that of the 2012. The Western mountaineering communities were apparently disturbed by this rumor. The UIAA declared, "As one of the most iconic landmarks of the world, Mount Everest belongs to all of mankind. Therefore, the UIAA does not support the addition of permanent structures to the ascent routes" (UIAA 2014). The half-Sherpa Dawa Steven once noted, "My father has always taught me to see our mountains and the natural environment as our assets" (D. Sherpa n.d.). This view may simply be regarded from the Western standpoint as exploitation of

Case: "Amusement Park" on Mt. Everest, Spring 2012

In a large dining tent at Base Camp of Mt. Everest, leaders of the thirteen bigger teams gathered to sit in an hour-long meeting on May 12 in 2012 (Figure 3-3). For the past several days, the weather had been clear. It was around the beginning of the usual two weeks' window, best for the summit bid, before the advent of Monsoon in June. However, most mountaineers were staying at Base Camp without making a clear plan for summit attempt because the last section of the route was not yet set up. "Why should we be just looking at this clear sky?" One of the leaders aimed his complaint at the rope that was not set up beyond the highest camp and at the lack of a rope-fixing team. They shared the urgency to devise a new plan of climbing.

This absence of a timely management of the route partly owed to the sudden abandonment of the largest group in that season, Himalayan Experience (HiMex). The HiMex expedition was organized by Russell Brice, the New Zealand Himalayan veteran often considered in mountaineering communities of the West the leader of "Everest family." A few days before this gathering, the group declared abandonment of that year's climb and bailed out from Base Camp because of the unusually dangerous conditions in the Khumbu Icefall (between Base Camp and Camp One) and at the Lhotse Face (between Camp Two and Camp Four). In fact, several casualties had already occurred among the team members. However, based upon the formal decision at the leader meeting of April 18, the HiMex was supposed to assume the supervising role to lead and manage fixing the rope on the route. "They did not even say to us a word about their

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the pristine nature with devastating anthropocentric pursuits.



Figure 3-3. Leader meeting at the Base Camp of Mt. Everest. After the HiMex team had withdrew, other expedition leaders gathered to set up a new plan to summit the mountain on May 12, 2012. Photo by the author.

canceling," complained one Sherpa Base Camp manager. As a result, an unusual leader meeting took place, which was, as ordinary in the tradition of Himalayan mountaineering, fairly democratic. They shared weather forecasts from different sources, discussed the time plan and, after some debate, arrived at a number of decisions: a new selection of Sherpa rope fixing team, division of chores that support the team, and an overall time plan regarding the following summit bid.

The fixing team first reached the mountain top on May 17, about ten days later than the typical first-ascent date. As a consequence, another six hundred climbers had to pursue the summit within the next few days before it was too late. This ascent aroused sensations to the world via the media due to its extraordinary nature: a long queue on the mid-part (between 24,000ft to 25,000ft) of the highest mountain (Figure 3-4). Moro, one



Figure 3-4. "Traffic Jam" on Mt. Everest. Several hundreds of climbers were in a long queue in between Camp Three and Four. May 18, 2012. Photo by the author.

of the three Westerners in the next year's brawl, abandoned this year's attempt of climbing both Mt. Everest and the neighboring Lhotse without using supplemental oxygen, accusing the "crowds" and calling the Everest massif "amusement park" (Stefanello 2012). Real hazards followed as if they were doomed: almost inevitably, summit climbers had to line up at many sections and suffer an exceptionally calamitous bottleneck at the notorious Hillary Step, several hundred feet away from the top. From the 19th through the 21st of May, a total of six mountaineers perished during their slowed summit bids.

Around this issue, a contrast is notable between the Western view and the Sherpa view. Despite the contrast, however, both claim themselves to be cosmopolitan. What might be called "partial cosmopolitanisms" are therefore rising on Mt. Everest. Climbing communities in the West, as well as the mass media, took this issue as, ultimately,

demonstrating the peril of commercialism in Himalayan mountaineering. They are concerned about its repercussions for the spirit of sporting and environmentalism, best displayed by the alpine-style climbing. For Sherpas, by contrast, the series of events signaled a limit of Western leverage on Himalayan mountaineering. It became a plain fact among Sherpas that HiMex's withdrawal is responsible for the disaster as well as for messing up the climbing of the final days. "[Russell Brice] made this condition [of the casualties]," said Tashi, one of Sherpa Base Camp managers (July 18, 2012, personal conversation). At the next day of the brawl a year later, referring to Moro's foul language that sparked the Sherpa attack, Tashi further condemned the Western assumption of leadership, saying, "European and American [mountaineers] have always seen low Asians—Korean, Chinese, Nepali, Indian. They would always think themselves being the leader [at an expedition]" (April 28, 2013, personal conversation). This is, he said, why he preferred to organize mountaineering expeditions comprised of non-Western climbers. For the Sherpas' eyes, all foreign mountaineers on Mt. Everest, whether experts or novices, are clients who will need Sherpa assistance.

At the "peace accord" gathering of the 2013 brawl, both fighting parties and others present signed on an agreement note that included this sentence: "Both parties have realized their errors and apologized to each other in front of those present." To this, Steck, one of the three Westerners, felt uncomfortable "because I am Swiss," for he had wished to make clear that "bad words" and "beating" were practiced by either party respectively. Others did not accept his request, for it might potentially call for a judicial investigation, which no one wished to provoke. Steck's demand for a rightful and

fact-based approach to this matter was repeatedly echoed by reactions of virtually all international media and eventually by the Cameron's report in *Alpinist*. She quotes a saying of Kathmandu-based expedition organizers: "[T]he fixing team was venting the frustration of all highly skilled and experienced Sherpa climbers who want to feel more respect from their fellow western colleagues" (Cameron 2013). What they put as "respect" seems, however, conceptualized in her report as a kind of courtesy not bothering other individuals in order to keep the rule of egalitarianism. The editorial wraps up with a comment of a Western bystander at the brawl: "These Sherpas had a right to express themselves … but they had no right to hurt another soul." On the grounds of this "freedom of speech without physically hurting anyone" ethic, that who was wrong is simply obvious, while everyone remains without knowing why the Sherpas are so.

The brawl and its aftermath generated a considerable sensation in the country as well. In his discussion of locality, Appadurai emphasizes "neighborhoods that contextualize those subjectivities" (Appadurai 1996:180). Sherpa's neighborhoods—with whom they negotiate, compete, and understand the foreign visitors—are not Westerners, but their fellow Nepalis with whom they share epistemology, ontology, and ethics. What Sherpa climbers, liaison officers, and non-Sherpa workers enjoyed to talk with porters, yak herders, lodge hostesses and so on was not very different from the broadcast version, whereas its nuance slightly differed: Moro and other Europeans cursed rope-fixing Sherpas, so were beaten and yet finally forgiven. Hardly may one mistake the sense of forgiving. For the Sherpas and other Nepalis, the Sherpas on Mt. Everest collectively showed mercy to the visitors. Without the benevolent Sherpa hospitality, the Westerners

might have had to suffer "ten years of forbidding their entry of Nepal," as Tashi said when hearing the policemen approaching to Base Camp from the lower village.

"Respect" in the Nepali collective mind seems rather alien to the Western mind. The local discourse clarifies two values in the notion of respect: on the one hand, foreign mountaineers are guests to the hosting Everest family, but never the other way around. Difference in valuations of mountaineering results in the difference in appreciations of the history of Himalayan mountaineering and of the governance of Mt. Everest. On the other hand, while violence is no doubt bad, insolence to the host is worse. To figure out the measure of ethics embedded in such the physical violence, one must consider the distinctive sense of the body. A group fight between different ethnic groups is not infrequent in both rural and urban Nepal, and the Westerners were once again invited as one of such groups to the world of Nepali epistemology, ontology, and ethics. A Nepali version of partial cosmopolitanism has been augmented throughout the brawl and its aftermath.

In sum, an anthromantic appreciation of the Sherpa has been a popular epistemological and ethical form of Western approach. The eurocentrically assumed human nature constitutes a basic framework in which diverse Western understandings of the Sherpa would take place, including those of mountaineers and anthropologists. Scholarly efforts to understand the Sherpa are reinforced by ethical justification in favor of the assumption. The brawl is hardly explained by economic relationships between Sherpas and visitors. Nor does it seem to be fully analyzable by taking into account micrological social patterns, such as ethnicity, nationalism, industry structure and so on.

One must address the manners through which Sherpas deal with individual and group, the mind and the body, conviviality and friendship, respect and hierarchy, collaboration and competition, history and time and so on.

3.5 Conclusion

I have argued that in the West the Sherpa are anthromantically conceptualized as a conglomeration of the mind, the body, and the community, a trinity that constitutes the basis of social system and social-scientific discourses in the West. I have shown that the anthropology of the Sherpa shares its root and assumptions with Himalayan mountaineering, which it often criticizes. The assumptions include the hierarchical, egalitarian, and anarchical presupposition of human sociality. This further provides an ethical standpoint to the visiting mountaineers and anthropologists from the West. The standpoint endorses apologetic discourses, such that Sherpas participate in Himalayan mountaineering because of money, and that Romantic Westerners cause an industrial havoc for the locals. This kind of "respect the locals," which cares this imagined state of affairs in the Himalayas, has been popularly encouraged by Western elite mountaineers, journalists, non-governmental institutions, tourism outfitters, and sociocultural anthropologists. I have argued that this creed reflects their own ethics rather than Nepali ethics. The brawl on Mt. Everest and its aftermath dramatically show this epistemological and ethical discrepancy. This partial cosmopolitanism in both parts recurs at the intercultural encounters around the Himalayas.

The findings of this chapter contribute to the main goal of the dissertation by identifying Western typical ways of understanding Himalayan mountaineering and the Sherpa. My intention was not to discuss variations or acts of resistance regarding the typical eurocentric epistemology and ethics. Nor did I intend to deny the empirical accuracy and ethical contributions those previous studies have attained for the public in the West. I merely wished to present an overview of the academic eurocentrism and the eurocentric cosmopolitanism operating in the Himalayas for decades. This kind of epistemological focus has been scarcely employed within sociocultural anthropology in recent decades, perhaps because of the ethical charge the question would inevitably carry. By juxtaposing with my own ethnographic discussions nonetheless, the findings will inform how Sherpa and Korean mountaineers are distinctive in the following chapters. Each of their epistemology, ontology, and ethics holds different visions from the Western visitors.

Chapter 4. Korean Cosmic Disposition on the Mountain: Taoist Idealism, Buddhist Dualism, and Confucian Hierarchy

4.1 Introduction: Banality on Mt. Everest and Non-Eurocentric Mountaineering

"Why should oxygen be so cold?" The vapid question lingered in my head. The gas mixed with the freezing air chilled my throat. I also had a deadly thirst, but was without craving for the precious gas. A little over 2 AM, in complete darkness, I climbed up the steep section of South Summit (8,750m/28,700ft), jugging up the fixed rope in a place I had never been, followed by Ngaa Tenji, my Sherpa guide.

The silly question—water and oxygen—continued. My thinking capacity was at a minimum. Thanks to my oxygen tank, which was providing me with three liters of oxygen per minute, climbing was not very hard although it was a steep incline. "Summit is right over there," Ngaa Tenji, a seven-time Mt. Everest summiteer, suddenly announced as we arrived at a snowy rocky cave around 3 AM. An hour and half of waiting and intermittent dozing soon froze me to shivering. At dawn, numbed and dazed, we climbed up the last fifty feet.

It was 4:30 AM on May 19, 2012 when we reached the top of Mt. Everest. The discourse about mountaineering seems to cherish such moments as this one as most glorious and spectacular, but I still recollect it as one of bizarre banality. The vista, certainly, was astounding: the earth was, we witnessed, global in shape. We could see the dropping curves of it in the distance all under our feet. Yet there was no divine feeling.



Figure 4-1. Jeong-Hwan Seo is turning around on 8500m (27900ft) of Mt. Everest (8,848m/29,029ft), May 19, 2012. Makalu (8,485m/27,825ft) stands in front. Photo by the author.

The fluttering lump of lungdas (Tibetan prayer flags) hung on the apex by the devout Tibetan highlanders for years seemed just mundane. It was merely another day and another dawn, and time passed quickly as always. For twenty minutes, we mechanically followed the summiteer's ritual—Ngaa Tenji took my camera and snapped photos of me as I held the flags of several key sponsors.

Standing on top of Mt. Everest is certainly a great achievement not only to the Western world but also to those of Sherpas and Koreans. Also, the unexpected mundane feeling, especially when one reached the top, has often been reported by mountaineers from the West as well. Whether banality or felicity, however, mountaineering experience may not necessarily lead Everest summiteers to, as the historic figure Francis Younghusband said of the first Mt. Everest expedition in 1921, "something pure and lofty and satisfying to that inner craving for the worthiest which all men have hidden in their

souls" (Howard-Bury 1922:7). I have discussed above (§3.2) that this individual-centered psychological notion of mountain climbing, which Younghusband assumes as universal, is a peculiar pattern throughout the eurocentric history of mountaineering. This conception of mountaineering is based on a set of several epistemological assumptions including the mind, the body, the community, landscapes, and the like, assumptions that sustain the academic eurocentrism and a eurocentric cosmopolitanism. The set of assumptions does not necessarily shed light on non-Western experiences of climbing and mountaineering. There are various examples that could be used to support this claim: mountaineers from the Soviet and post-Soviet societies have practiced a collective style of climbing both in practical and ideological terms (Maurer 2009).[79] The Chinese nationalist bliss and heroism at the moment of being on the top of Mt. Everest via the North-Col route in 1960 provoked confusion if not skepticism from a number of leading Western Himalayan mountaineers. The massive "siege-tactics" employed by the 1997 Korean expedition on the difficult west face of Gasherbrum IV (7,925m/26,001ft) which required team-oriented and non-individualist acts remains one of the exemplary feats exhibited by the Asian mountaineers that caused confusions from the climbing communities in the West (Jensen-Choi 2014; Venables 2005).

In sum, events of mountaineering practiced by non-Westerners including my own climb of Mt. Everest described above may well serve as examples of cultural attitudes that exhibit distinctive epistemology, ontology, and ethics. After my 2012 summit climb,

[79] Returning from Russia where he engaged himself with the Russian mountaineers, the American John Armitage noted, "[The Russian mountaineers] find it as hard to understand the American way of private climbing as we do their way of group climbing" (Armitage 1968:8).

a qualm about the banality I had felt on the top has continued for long in my mind; this reflective process took place in conjunction with intimate social relationships of mine. Throughout the followed reflections of the mountaineering experience, there has been no place for the loftiness and bliss the Victorian Younghusband admired. I came to realize that both my expectation of the "spiritual" experience and meditative achievements that followed from the banality are part of my experience of practicing mountaineering in a way distinctively shared with those in Korea, the country in which I was born and raised. My standing on top of the mountain was in many ways a result of collective social processes the nature of which is different from eurocentric ones I reviewed in Chapter 3. Further, the spiritual quality sought from the extreme athletic quest can also be found in my cultural background, rather than attributable to any universal feature of the climbing practice.

Thus, from this chapter I focus on distinctive cultural attitudes of Korean and Sherpa mountaineers as opposed to Westerners. This and next chapters deal with Korean mountaineers and aim to identify major patterns in their Himalayan mountaineering experiences. To take into account grounding dispositions in ethnographic discussions, I attempt to reconcile two contrasting theoretical perspectives customary in sociocultural anthropology: a socio-historical perspective and a phenomenological perspective. For this reconciliation, I suggest *cosmic disposition* as a methodological concept. In the next section, I explain this concept, following the brief outline of the concept in the introduction (§1.2). The other sections in this chapter discuss the making of Korean cosmic disposition in regard to the mountain and mountaineering. By reading historical

texts and gathering insights from contemporary scholarly literature in the country, I suggest that roots of Koreans' contemporary Himalayan mountaineering experiences are founded in three major traditions in the Korean peninsula: Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism. These earliest traditions may be called "foundational" because they are the earliest known thus far and because they are enduring. From the socio-historical-cum-phenomenological perspective, in this chapter I suggest that the Korean cosmic disposition characteristically manifested in the mountaineering discourse may be best theorized as Taoist idealism, Buddhist duality, and Confucian hierarchy. I will examine the rise and development of each of the three major traditions in the Korean peninsula as they relate to the mountain and to mountaineering experiences.

4.2 Cosmic Disposition: A Reconciliation between Socio-Historical and Phenomenological Perspectives

Sociocultural anthropologists have considered "experience," such as mountain climbing, as a meaningful object of study. In the study, they have used various theoretical perspectives that lie somewhere in between socio-historical and phenomenological perspectives. Socio-historical perspective is of the mainstream sociological tradition that situates particular events within societal, economic, political, and global circumstances that historical contingencies constitute (cf. Schwartz 1955). Theoretically, this perspective posits presuppositions such as those of Marx, Weber, or Durkheim and has been developed throughout significant turning points marked by the rise of such

movements as social constructivism (Berger and Luckmann 1967) and Foucauldian post-structuralism.

On the other hand, phenomenological perspective aligns with the philosophies of German and French thinkers such as Husserl and Sartre, or Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty. The perspective attempts to take into account significances that arise from experiences and their intersections. It also seeks to appreciate the significances in their own terms without a recourse to essential canons like a Kantian pure reason or to any ontologically hierarchical constitution of the world. Thomas Csordas, Tim Ingold, and Michael Jackson can be named among many other anthropologists who have been working from this perspective.

The two perspectives are often considered inherently irreconcilable with each other. It is partly because the general concept of human being understood by both is, in many cases, intrinsically atomistic. Sahlins (2008) identifies a eurocentric concept of human being as a "Metaphysical Triangle" of Hobbesian anarchy, Thucydidesian hierarchy, and Adamsian equality. Individuals are considered social atoms, consisted of mind as separate from body and the body as separate from community. In the previous chapter, I proposed a concept of *anthromanticism* to refer to a Romantic assumption of human nature found outside the West. In an anthromantic penchant, a study of non-Western population tends to conform to a tripartite model of psychology, physiology, and sociology, each being mutually exclusive to one another. This assumed division of the three isolated compartments ultimately leads to the opposing of the socio-historical perspective to the phenomenological perspective. Operating in both levels of experience

and of scholarly understanding of the experience, the opposition between the two perspectives as well as the division between three compartments are peculiarly Western and tally with the Sahlins's observation. This does not mean that in non-Western worlds is found no such a distinction among the three parts of mind, body, and community, nor there is no division between history and present or between social system and individual. Both Koreans and Sherpas have developed each of their own systemic approach to social phenomena, and my point is that the distinctiveness in these differing systems should be addressed.

My reconciliation project of the two perspectives requires a genealogical interpretation of the distinctive ways of understanding. The investigation should be genealogical in order to identify typically recurring characteristics as separate from particularities or anomalies. The ideal scope of the genealogy aims events of all historical period, since by reading between the lines of history it reconstructs epistemology, ontology, and ethics. A phenomenological approach would aim an exclusive investigation of the particularities and anomalies. I maintain that a real significance of these objects would emerge only from their conjunction with the typically recurring characteristics, insofar as particularities may ascertain themselves only when they underscore or challenge the generalities. I call the overarching character of the generalities "cosmic" as they interface with the phenomenological features, for these general properties supply to the members the most fundamental, yet distinctive, attitudes in reference to the world and basic forms of acting and "un-acting." As a set of foundational techniques, the cosmic disposition grounds the activity of becoming, the ontology of knowing, and the ethics of

mattering altogether, in a way that ontology, epistemology, and ethics are inextricably intertwined. Karan Barad (2007) calls this preobjective regime "ethico-onto-epistemology." The particularistic here-and-now phenomenological elements in their pragmatic imports of reproduction and innovation interact and collaborate with the cosmic disposition. I will call this reciprocal unfolding "cosmic process" when I focus on ethnographic details in the next chapter.[80]

The inclusive character in the concepts of cosmic disposition and cosmic process is intended to avoid atomistic penchants persisted in classical sociological theories, such as culture-process theories. In the theoretical frameworks, individuals are considered a sort of vehicles that administer the process by virtue of their unchallenged function of subjectivity. Embedded within social systems, they are called "agents" or "actors" and supposed to reproduce the social systems. Anthony Giddens (1984) calls this process "structuration." Or, their "consciousnesses" are considered to possibly create new "images" of culture based on cultural patterns and symbol systems by Gananath Obeyesekere's (1981) "subjectification." In the privilege of individual subjectivity and the assumption of its agential character, "cosmology" in sociocultural anthropology has come to mean abstract and conceptualized interpretations of the universe. In addition, the interpretation is regarded as, as Frederick Barth claims, a set of knowledge "mainly

[80] Thomas H. Huxley (1825-1895) firstly used the coinage "cosmic process." Though he did not specifically define what was meant by the term, the Darwinian evolution was, for him, "a generalized statement of the method and results of that process" (Huxley 1997[1894]:287). He criticized the social evolutionism of Herbert Spencer and brought up with "ethical process" to overcome the blind social adaptation of the survival-of-the-fittest principle. In a strict sense, he noted, the ethical process belonged to the cosmic process. Conceived in this way, the cosmic process may refer to a total progression of the whole universe. My concept of "cosmic process" is of a same kind but denotes particular, localized, time-bound components within the totality.

located in *one* mind" (Barth 1987:29; italics mine). Similarly, Laurel Kendall has observed among South Koreans *han*, or an enduring psychological character that holds unfulfilled desires (1988:8). Without assuming the individuality embedded in such an academic privilege of an individual's subjectivity function or of a certain role an individual takes part in the emergence of history, my conceptualizations of cosmic disposition and cosmic process aim to retrieve the sense of practical imports concerning the whole world. The main task is to identify invisible and enduring patterns that command conspicuous social relations and historical directions.

As a point of departure for this discussion, the significance of the mountain as a metaphor in the country is worthy of note. In *Korean Mountains from the Humanities Perspective* (2014), the geographer Choi Won-Suk argues, "In our culture, mountain is like a master key." Like the Ortnerean key symbol (1973), according to him, Korean cultural life is exhaustively deciphered through the idea of the mountain. "The shadow of mountain is," he argues, "embedded in history, geography, religion, architecture, aesthetics, human life cycles, and every other discipline, with no exception" (Choi 2014:14). Wherever one visits in the Korean peninsula, his or her vista will mostly face hills, mountains and valleys and least likely reach the horizon. The Korean word that refers to landscape literally means "mountain and river" (*gangsan* or *sancheon*), and the mountain as a metaphor is widespread throughout the country and observable from everyday practices.[81] People are generally familiar with the mountainous landscape, and

[81] Some of these mountain-related everyday practices include these: the nation-founding myth depicts that Koreans originated from a mountain. God, in the widest sense of the term, is *sansin* or the mountain god. The utopias (Cheonghak-dong and Ubok-dong) are located in mountains (Jirisan and Sokrisan). After

doing something on a mountain would, contrary to the Europeans (cf. Descola 2013a), by no means directly expose them to a contra-human danger in both ethical and ontological senses. This ethico-ontological connectivity may be one of the most foundational characteristics the tradition of Korean Himalayan mountaineering displays in contrast to Western mountaineers' experiences.

Based on this foundational connectivity, the people in the country have related themselves to the mountain in various terms. An ancient anecdote can help us make a general sense of the variety of the relationship. In 547 of the Sinra kingdom (58BC-935AD), national and individual characters were described and explained as linked to the mountain. For recruitment of *hwarang*, or special government officials, a collection of youngsters was said to have "visited and enjoyed mountains and rivers faraway," and "learned with one another on the path of righteousness," "in order to avail the wisdom that lets one to know what is right and what is wrong, so one to be recommended to the Court" (Lee 1998:128).[82] In this ancient description, I find three characteristics that correspond with the practices of contemporary Korean mountaineering: 1) mountains and rivers being prime destinations, 2) exploratory learning of spiritual and ethical knowledge, and 3) collective learning and mutual assessment. As I demonstrate below, these aspects respectively represent three sets of ethico-onto-epistemological doctrinal teachings widespread in the country: Korean geocology with Taoist propensity, Mahayana Buddhism, and Confucianism (later,

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deaths, Koreans are entombed in *sanso*, literally a place in the mountain.

[82] "The Year 37 of the Kingship Jinheung, Chapter Four, The Main Period of Silla," *Samkuksaki* (The History of Three Kingdoms, 1145) by Bu-Sik Kim.

Korean Neo-Confucianism). In the following sections, I examine these traditions respectively, in regard to the mountain and mountaineering.

4.3 Taoist Idealism: Ethico-ontological Continuity

This section focuses on the Taoist tradition in the Korean peninsula. At one extreme, the familiarity Koreans have maintained with the mountain is linked to the perfection of the self. Established upon Korean geoecological cosmology, Taoism, as a set of doctrinal and everyday practices, has strengthened ontological connections Koreans form with the mountain in ethical terms. The connectivity is specific to Koreans and demands careful attention. Though the mountain is one of the most significant metaphors in East Asian countries including China, Japan, and Korea, Korean traditional perceptions of mountain landscapes differ from the others in a number of respects.

Two notions are notable in the *pungsu* (*fengshui* in China) custom: *maek* and *bibo*. Maek refers to a notion in which mountain is understood through its outlook continuation as a representation of sustaining *ki* (*qi* in Chinese; meaning vital energy or, later in Neo-Confucian scholarship, configurative energy). This notion is absent from the Japanese fengshui system, except that of the Okinawa archipelago (Sizuyaki 2006; cf. Cheon 2014).[83] Bibo refers to practices that manually make over the landscape. By constructing a stone tower, a small hill, a dam, or a forest, the practitioners symbolically

[83] The theories and practices of fengshui widespread across East Asia may be divided into two classes according to their basic principles: system of form (*hyeongbeop*) and system of reason (*ibeop*). The former gives emphasis on the outlook of landscape, while the latter follows the Yin-and-Yang and *bagua* (literally "eight symbols") systems, which characterize the Taoist cosmology. Sibuya Sizuyaki (2006) summarizes that the system of form is almost absent in Japan, whereas the system of reason is not observable in Korea. The two forms coexist in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, although in China the system of

alter a defective land into an auspicious one, thereby transforming characteristics, temperaments, and destiny of the people living in the land.[84] Practiced communally, bibo puts a category of settlement in the center of the larger symbolic landscape. A variety of bibo practices have been observed both in China and Korea, but the Korean bibo is characterized by special emphasis on human ontological capability. While in China all things are organized dichotomously by sky and land (i.e. the yin-and-yang dualism), in Korea they are organized trichotomously by sky, land, and human (i.e. *samjae* or ternary monism) (cf. Choi 2014: Ch.6).[85] In this humanistically interactive relationship among the categorical members of the universe, bibo exhibits the proactive capacity of Korean cosmic disposition throughout moral and virtuous spheres, which therefore potentially move beyond the visual distinctions between the members. In this human-centered sense, Korean practices of pungsu differ from those of the Chinese "correlative cosmology" (Henderson 1984).

From a classical geographical-deterministic point of view, a number of Korean geographers and philosophers have drawn theories from estimations of geographic features to consider the differences between the geoecologies of Korea and China. The

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form is considered better by the majority of the people.

[84] Bibo practices (often called "*josan*") include piling up a permanent small hill (*josan*); planting or creating forests; constructing a dam (*chukdong*), a stone tower (*tap*), or a wooden pole (*sotdae*); and making use of preexisting monuments. In the past, and in many parts of the country today as well, Koreans have conducted bibo practices in order to prevent loss of properties, preclude female commitment of adultery, or dissolve out prevalent warmongering tendencies (Choi 2014: Ch.8).

[85] The *cheonjiin* (literally "sky, land, and human") principle is regarded as originated from Dan-gun kingdom, the mythical founding nation of the Korean peninsula. The tripartite components in this principle does not refer to the basic entities that constitute the world—the principle is not a kind of atomism in the sense formulated in the Greek cosmology. Instead, each of the three poles is a distinct agential foundation that organizes the existential world: in a word, agential trialism. Also, it is ontologically based on a monistic vision in the sense that the trichotomous agency interacts one another

landscape in China is generally characterized by rugged mountains, undulating hills, and extensive plains. The landscape in Korea, on the other hand, is characterized by recurring patterns of mountain, stream, and settlements (or plain), wherein mountains mostly lie along conspicuous ridges and are not very high—the top is within reach. Therefore, some Korean scholars argue that the sky-land-human and time-space-human twofold trialism (i.e. three elements), the foundational ontology of Taoism, has been originated from the people of the northeast, Dong-I (eastern outlanders) as they lived in the regions of Manchu and the Korean peninsula to the east of the mainland China, and was later expanded over China. Though visually discrete, the threefold structure of the universe is inseparable and directly influential. "Due to the omnipresence of compassionate hills," Choi argues,

> [The human and the mountain have] harmonized one another as if they connect each other in human relationships. Rather than viewing antagonistically to be conquered like in the West, or being overwhelmed like in China, the Koreans came to institute the notion of bibo. In this notion, they coexist by leveling if the hill's ki is too strong and raising and enhancing if the hill's ki is too weak. (Choi 2014:104)

An interesting comparison can be made to this Korean geography/cosmology relation is the emergence of the Western irreconcilable dualism as the core of the Greek and Hebrew cosmology from the Middle Eastern landscape of desert. Based on the identical geographic determinism, Sog-O Kang (1990:25) argues that the dualism arose from the continuously harsh land full of rocky mountains, a place initially hard for

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by a unilateral force of organization.

humans to inhabit. Contrary to this discontinuity between sky and land, the Korean cosmology allows an ontologically continuous plane on which humans may play a central role. Whether or not this geographically deterministic point of view is valid, the geographers' finding of the Korean ontological characteristic is worth noting. The Korean philosopher Jeong-Seol Kim (1897-1966) called this monism "*cheon-in-ilgi*" (literally, "sky and man are of one ki"), which is "the characteristic that differs from the West" (P. Kim 1986:88). This ontological continuity manifested in everyday geoecological practices is also sustained in, as I discuss below, the dualism of mind and body (*honbaek* or "the soul of mind and the soul of body") in the Korean tradition of Buddhism (Y. Kim 1990:114).

What I am arguing is not that this geographical determinism helps one understand contemporary Korean practices on the mountain. Nor does I wish to suggest the traditional geoecological practices provide a basic frame of reference by which Koreans practice climbing in and outside the country. Few Korean travelers, including Himalayan mountaineers, would bring about connections between the Himalayan landscape and pungsu or other man-and-mountain connective principles. My point is that the ethic-ontological continuity is an enduring character in all this transformation. I also suggest that Taoism has played a crucial role in strengthening this ethico-ontological continuity by conventionalizing idealism, often visionary and "unrealistic" idealism, through doctrinal teachings and pious practices. For example, people have long imagined and practiced *sinseondo* or a set of practices to become a Taoist hermit who is believed to

hold miraculous powers. While the origin of Taoism is still in debate,[86] at least from the seventh century the Taoist hermit (*seon-in*) has been of a Korean-specific form with a special affinity with the mountain landscape. The hermit was considered an ideal human who disciplined and perfected him or herself by living "in" a number of socially recognized *myeongsan*s or virtuous mountains (literally "renowned mountain"). The perfect virtue is potentially obtainable from the mountain. Also, practices associated with mountains, such as mountain travel, came to connote miraculous merits humans may ultimately contain. In sum, the tradition of Taoism in the Korean peninsula has sustained the ethico-ontological continuity Koreans imagined and practiced in relation to landscape.

4.4 Mahayana Buddhist Tradition: Mind-and-Matter Dualism and Cosmological Order of Elsewhere-Originality

With regard to mountaineering, there are four distinctive implications of the Buddhist tradition in Korea. First, the tradition made the people familiar with the tendency of adoring the mountain landscape. Second, it instituted the mind-and-matter dualism that mountaineers employ. Based upon this dualism, third, it provided a metaphysical backbone for spiritual, laborious quests including expeditionary mountaineering practiced by the people. Finally, it strengthened collectivity by fostering empathetic practices that mountaineers exercise, what I call "mind connection."

[86] One of the debates is over whether the Korean Taoist cast was autochthonous and supported later by the sophisticated doctrine of Chinese Taoism, or else it was a pure adoption of the latter.

The socio-political context of the Buddhist tradition in Korean peninsula furnished an affinity between the religion and the mountain. During the period of Joseon dynasty (1392-1897), for political reasons, Buddhist practices were stigmatized as superstitious in contrast to Confucianism, and persecuted in the social and political mainstream. Temples were ousted from town centers. For their new places of worship, Buddhist monks chose the best places in almost every myeongsan and moved their temples, most of which we see today. No mountain that is known virtuous is without Buddhist temples in Korea. Both metaphorically and practically, mountains came to have spiritual connotations in the society.

For the present topic, one of the most important roles the country's Buddhist tradition played is the making of mind-and-matter dualism. The inception of the dualism was initiated with, and induced by, practices of learning that involved spiritual and physical quests: ontology is inseparable from epistemology that is inseparable from ethics from the Buddhist viewpoint. In the time of institutionalization as a religion (i.e. constituting a set of theological doctrine, spiritual belief, and social relationship), Buddhist practices were largely consisted of exploratory quests in simultaneously spiritual and physical terms. In the mid-second century, Mahayana Buddhism was introduced to China by a few monks such as An Shigao from Parthian Empire (modern Iran) and Lakaksema from Kushan Empire (modern Pakistan). Their translation of the Mahayana sutras into Chinese texts originated the long Buddhist tradition in China and other countries of East Asia. However, the myriad contradictions and discrepancies in the translated texts that were available to Buddhist monks in China led some of them to

depart on "pilgrimages" seeking the original texts.[87] One of the earliest pilgrims was Xuanzang (c. 602-664). He made a twenty-year journey, visiting 110 countries and city states from contemporary Xinjiang to Persia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. This kind of exploratory religious practice became patterned in the seventh through eighth century China. Like Xuanzang, Hyecho (c. 704-787) from the Sinra kingdom conducted a pilgrimage for seven years to South and Central Asia (723-729). During the journey, he acquainted himself with cultures and languages in the faraway countries and sought after the origin of the esoteric Buddhism.[88] This earliest form of pilgrimage in the tradition exhibits the very first efforts made for seeking both unknown, deeper, and imperturbable mind (*nirvana*) and unknown, located-afar and original material, reachable by going through physical hardships. This quest, a eurocentric perspective would readily dissect into spirituality and geography, cannot be divided so by pondering their practices. Before this pilgrimage, no historical record in East Asia describes the distances one recognizes with one's own mind, therefore forging the notion of "inner mind," and with original matter out there in such an outstanding manner. It was also this era when the mind as an abstract state of consciousness, rather than a natural continuation of the heart as in the ancestral concept, was theorized and widely appreciated in the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism (Mun 2013: Ch.10).

[87] Until around the second century AD, Buddhism had been propagated by teachers and missionaries in local dialects in opposition to the already well established Hindu Brahmanical tradition which was transmitted in Sanskrit, the classical language of India (Snellgrove 2000:130-134).

[88] He became the first person who traveled both the sea-Silk Road and the land-Silk Road to the Arabian countries.

In my view, this twofold duality of inner spiritual learning, which must be sought exploratory, geographically or physically, is one of the characteristic features of the practical aspect of enlightenment in East Asia and, in particular, of premodern as well as modern mountaineering practiced by Koreans. This East Asian mode of high appeal to geographical-spiritual Other seems widespread through most serious ventures in contemporary Korean society, such as the trend of studying abroad, businesses in global contexts, and international tourisms like Himalayan mountaineering expedition. This ethico-onto-epistemological dualism of mind and matter requires meditation in overcoming physical adversity to achieve enlightenment. This is how the Buddhist dualist appeal differs from the eurocentric valuation of mountaineering for its own sake—especially the Mummeryesque notion of mountaineering as somatic problem solving (§3.2). In a theoretical level, Nelson Graburn (2004) conceptualized tourism as "secular ritual," endorsing the dichotomy of sacred/nonordinary/touristic and profane/workaday/at-home. As an instance of cosmic process in the East Asian Buddhist tradition, journey experience is not sacred on its own, but it remains "profane" until one carries out fuller appreciation that may still unfold after the completion of an actual experience. Mountaineering—as opposed to rock or ice climbing that is not necessarily expeditionary—involves journey with unexpected hardships of all kinds that mountaineers have to deal with and is fittingly applied for contemporary Koreans to pursue a noble goal.

This beyond-its-own-sake valuation in the case of mountaineering was well epitomized by a paragraph written by Jong-In Hong, the third and the fifth president of

Corean Alpine Club (1954-1966, 1970-1971). This was part of the preface for the first serious publication about modern mountaineering in Korea, *Encyclopedia of Mountaineering Skills* (Son 1978[1961]), written by the mountaineer and mountaineering historian, Gyeong-Seok Son (1926-2013). Hong writes,

> No matter who you are, you will get eased within the taciturn mountains as you climb them repeatedly. In the end, you may perhaps question yourself, "Why did I want to come to the mountains? What did I achieve after I climbed mountains?" and you will find enlightened yourself of a certain kind. (Son 1978:33)

In the same vein, Eun-Sun Oh related mountaineering to the larger scope of a mountaineer's life. She claimed to be the first woman climbing all fourteen over-eight-thousand-meter peaks, albeit her achievement is debated. At an international mountaineering conference in Italy in 2015, she argued, "East Asians do not regard mountains as objects to conquer. Climbing mountains for them is to cultivate virtue, that is, meditation. It is to create a better life."[89] This statement expresses two important features of Korean modern mountaineering as a cosmic process emerging from the Buddhist cosmic disposition: 1) priority is granted on meditation rather than acts of climbing; and 2) the object of meditation is the sum of mountain experiences rather than each mountaineering instance. In other words, Koreans climb mountains, in principle, not only because they wish to enjoy the climb itself, but ideally because they wish to apply the mountain experiences in wider contexts, here a kind of spiritual growth. Denounced is an attitude that seeks only the pleasure of climbing yet no more. This does not mean that

[89] E. Oh talked this at a conference taken place at Messner Mountain Museum, Bolzano, Italy, May 5,

Korean mountaineers do not seek, find, or enjoy somatic and psychic pleasures from climbing; they do. My point is that the source of climbing "pleasure" customarily stretches beyond acts of climbing and reaches farther, particularly when one contemplates in retrospect one's own mountain experiences of the past, and by situating the acts of climbing within the larger context of one's own life.

Further, the practical as well as theoretical making of "inner mind" that the Korean Buddhist tradition has facilitated requires no isolation of one mind from the other. Individual minds may be connected with one another: in everyday interpersonal and wider social lives, I suppose, expectations of sympathy pervade to an exceptional degree, and speculations of other's unspoken thought easily pass muster. In the Mahayana tradition, all practitioners are encouraged to become Boddhisattva, who puts off his or her awakening in order to assist others to achieve enlightenment, because compassion is presumed to arise spontaneously as one practices. In line with Buddhist notion of mind and meditating practices, Koreans endorsed, notably, a direct relation between individual minds, a technique called "*isimjeonsim*"—literally meaning "one mind is transferred to the other mind"—and conceived an absolute cosmopolitanism (*manmin-gongdongchejueui*). By origin, isimjeonsim refers to a method of meditation by which a master teaches his or her students sitting next to him or her without talking, writing, or proceeding argumentations. This notion became popular among the public and readily understood and applied as, under the Confucian creed of "harmonism," a principle of reaching fast agreements and building up assumptive collectivity. The collective

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2014, as part of the 62nd Trento Film Festival (Lim 2014).

assumption and practice of the unexpressed "inner" mind (*sokma-eum* or *soknae*) in everyone's mental state lacks isolation of one mind to the other. This invisible connectivity is a striking difference Korean mind-and-matter dualism has to do with the Cartesian dualism. Based on this universal capability of mind connection, the absolute cosmopolitanism is conceptualized as universal for every humankind, for everyone is foundation of the being of everyone else (Han 1992[1913]:40).[90] In other words, it is viable to grasp what others' have in their own minds without verbal or other palpable communicative practices but by exploring one's own mind. This inclusive notion of the self in Korean cosmic disposition helped to form a specific tradition of sociality that is both dualist and collectivist. Collective forms of mountaineering, for example, instead of solo or alpine-style climbing that would allow the climber to focus more on somatic and psychic tackling of climbing problems, might well be an arena for practicing enlightenment.

There is a serious misunderstanding in the discourses of Western mountaineers, as they relate the moment of climbing to Buddhist enlightenment. Messner writes of Buddhist nirvana almost interchangeably with his Nietzschean interpretation of alpinism (§3.2). He describes his feeling of being on the top or in "Death Zone" (*Todeszone*) as "enormous enhancement of life" (*enormen steigerung des lebens*, Messner 1978:51) or "inner peace" (*innere Ruhe*; ibid., 23). He considers this extraordinary experience the best goal of climbing and calls such a climb "being-mountain-climbing" (*Seinsbergsteigen*), as opposed to "conquering-mountain-climbing"

[90] The Korean scholar Yong-Un Han argued for the universal True Self, which was neglected by Kant who

(*Eroberungsbergsteigen*; ibid., 216). The way he engages in the being-mountain-climbing is to rationalize mountain experience by letting the Self open to authentic experiences, while keeping a minimum set of rationality (ibid., 196). This rendering of Buddhist practice mistakes the concepts of enlightenment and liberation that go well beyond the moments of meditating practice.

This paired understanding between mountaineering and Buddhist meditation is of course an ideal and theoretical framing for both Koreans and Buddhophilic mountaineers. Few mountaineers would purposefully relate their mountain experience to the Buddhist idea of meditation. However, Korean mountaineers like E. Oh ventured on high mountains without considering much the minimalist style of mountaineering that Western mountaineers value highly to climb near one's limit and to maximize individual feeling. Korean mountaineers have favored feeling sharing, harmonious teamwork, deeper learning, and self-reflection. The country's Buddhist tradition has advanced this twofold dualism of mind and matter and of here and there.

4.5 Confucian Tradition: Cultivation of Individual Virtues through Pseudo-Familial Sociality

In a number of respects, Koreans draw in significance from the Confucian tradition when engaging in activities of mountain sports and tourism such as hiking, backpacking, rock and ice climbing on the mountain, alpine climbing, enjoying mountain scenery, and visiting famous mountains. While the Korean Buddhist tradition has mainly

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observed only the other two aspects of the Self (the Self of Pure Reason and the Self of Free Will).

furnished for every serious endeavor the dual metaphysical character (mind and matter and originality out there), Confucianism has marshaled ethical principles. In doctrinal level, three core ideas are valued: dedication to learning, emphasis on social relationships, and moral integrity against personal greed (Richey 2013). Teachings and practices based on these principles notably carved the social and ethical aspect of Korean cosmic disposition. In addition, Neo-Confucian tradition in the country since the fifteenth century nurtured mountaineering as a socially sanctioned project.

Confucian sociality is omnipresent in Korean experiences of Himalayan mountaineering. The central maxim of Confucius's (551-479 BC) teaching centers on the principle of *li* (benevolence), the primary instinct of being true to oneself and forgiving others thereby. Since humans are, in this thought, considered fundamentally benevolent to others, the question is how to practice it. A Christian principle may be comparable to the teaching of Confucius: "as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them" (Luke 6:31). In Confucianism, this Christian sympathy is further applied to individual self-cultivation. Confucian morality puts forward a collective approach by directly assisting other's individual self-cultivation with what I call "active sympathy." Confucius said, "The man of perfect virtue, wishing to perfect himself, seeks also to let others perfect themselves; wishing to achieve, he seeks to let others achieve."[91] While individual self-cultivation may be an ultimate goal among those cultivating in most Confucian traditions (China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam), Koreans have laid emphasis on strictly defined social settings, warranting age hierarchy and being accustomed to active

[91] "己欲立而立人，己欲達而達人" (Lunyu [The Analects of Confucius] VI. 30. [150-2]).

sympathy. In most expeditionary mountaineering trips practiced by Koreans, for example, the eldest member ideally plays the part of the group leader. Though very rare, there might be a mountaineer wanting to join an expedition, who is under experienced yet older than others. In such a case, others would expect from the elder benevolent gestures of sacrificing the authority. Division of labor is according to the Confucian social principle: ideally, each member of an expedition plays a distinct part, such as climbing leader, equipment, food, financial matters, communication, transportation, medicine, reporting, and so on. Individual freedom is desirable to each position when being granted under an appropriate supervision of and critical decisions made by seniors. Further, the success of an expedition, usually reaching the top by at least one member, is ideally a collaboration of all this and may well be identified with the goal of each climber. Solidarity to a maximized degree will be essential for this collective project, for which the active sympathy is a prerequisite. To nurture this sympathy among the members of a newly formed expedition, normally they share a prolonged period of preparation. The preparation period that spans several months to a year or two involves a variety of community activities, such as weekly meeting, purchasing goods, packing loads, and daily, weekend, or camp training.

As a means of Confucian sociality, the active sympathy would best operate at a certain kind of group formation. Group size matters: in the history of Korean Himalayan mountaineering, the average number of members per expedition from 1962 to 2003 is 7.5 and that from 2004 to 2014 is 5.6. The noticeable decrease may be attributed to several fourteen-peak racers who rather climbed in smaller groups in recent years and to

increasing teams in the alpine style. In any case, Korean mountaineers seem to have viewed, depending on the climbing prospect of an aimed mountain, a team of around five to eight members to best meet success of an expedition (to the total number of each expedition the ratio of summiteers is much low). In this idealized grouping, a closely tied relationship among the members is both available and preferred to resort, as noted by a number of Korean scholars (D. Chung 1986; D. Kim 2014). In many cases, mountaineering clubs have organized mountaineering expeditions abroad, as the club culture that involves interpersonal relationships and easily allows intimacy between the club members has long been practiced throughout the history of Korea since the premodern era. The active sympathy, which may possibly allow Koreans to achieve best social ethics, requires a micro-Confucian grouping, in which every member is hierarchically and organically interrelated. Korean mountaineers interact with one another and view mountaineers outside of their expeditions by applying asymmetrically sympathetic approach.[92]

Later development of Confucianism paved the way to mountain travels and particularly provided rationale for the contemporary Himalayan mountaineering as

[92] Korean anthropologist David Chung identified the Korean basic form of social nexus as *bungdang* (a form of political faction), a pseudo-kin group that shares solidarity. Larger than the tight Japanese social organization principle and smaller than the exposed Chinese one, the typical size of bungdang, according to Chung, is both small enough to form strong fidelity relationships and large enough to be at odds with other members in the group (D. Chung 1986). The nature of fidelity matters here. An identical kind of fidelity has reigned over both private and public realms, differently from the elemental divergence of *oikos* (house) and *polis* (city), or *idion* ("one's own") and *koinon* ("common and public") in the Greek society (D. Kim 2014; cf. Arendt 1958; Weber 1951). Korean sociologist Deok-Yeong Kim observes that the modern Korean society does not constitutes a civil society, but comprises various levels of pseudo-family including not only microscopic real families and macroscopic familial nation but multifarious mesoscopic (middle) familial forms (D. Kim 2014:179). According to him, therefore, in Korean society, "individuals are surrounded in layers by manifold social orders and social forces" (D. Kim 2014:254).

ethically accountable. Zhu Xi (1130-1200) and other Chinese scholars suggested doctrines in a way more rationalist and secular than the classical Confucianism so as to be called Neo-Confucianism. Around the thirteenth century, the doctrines were incorporated and further developed through wider debates in the Joseon dynasty, providing Korean scholars with metaphysical backbones for two popular notions. For one, the mountain landscape came forth as one of the best embodiments of the fundamental principle of the universe (*i*).[93] For another, self-discipline was required in moral terms and practiced by learning the principles on the mountain. From the sixteenth century, Confucian scholars began to travel mountains and mountainous regions for two reasons: the widespread Taoist idealism of superhuman potential through mountain experience and its popularization with Buddhist temples' retreats. The scholars considered the combination of mountain and stream (*sansu*) the primordial object that embodies the logic of the universe, thus worthy of study, and a microphysical place where, through self-education, they could reflect upon themselves, cultivate reverence, and achieve enlightenment (Choi 2014:226; Oh and Arditi 2010). The mountain turned into a medium, seemingly contradictory to the Taoist tradition where mountains as an existential reality were worthy by themselves. Choi calls this a "qualitative change" in the Korean perception of the mountain (2014: Ch.15-6). It was also a notable turning point in the history of mountain travel in the peninsula. They began to attempt an understanding of the logic of the natural and social worlds and cultivate themselves by meditating on the abstracted principles. In particular, direct observation of one's own experiential

[93] Within the neo-Confucian scholarships, li was considered to have existed even before the formations of

phenomena *in* mountainscape was regarded as one of the best practices for the learning. The human body with its all sensual capacity was considered the best method that connects the self with nature through ki (configurative energy in this scholarship), thus nature being a whole configurative field on the one hand, and, on the other, the body providing the self with correlative knowledge (Chang 2012). Scholars increasingly chose to partake in mountain lives, make excursions to myeongsans, observe natural landscapes, and document their own feelings in these carefully designed activities.[94]

It was the seventeenth century when a premodern form of mountaineering was born in the Korean peninsula, as a social and political expression of the evolving cosmic disposition. The historical context is a mixture between intensifying court politics and much sophisticated and individualized tradition of Neo-Confucian scholarship. This gave rise to a major development in mountain-traveling customs among the middle and upper class Koreans. By becoming a tradition, moreover, the custom of mountain travel as a cosmic process reciprocally impacted the cosmic disposition out of which it was born. To date, more than six hundred pieces of mountain travelogues (*yusan-gi* or "mountain excursion report") on 134 mountains published in the era have been identified (H. Park 1993; Y. Park 2004). The number of all publications may count up to fifteen hundred (Kweon et al. 2015). Notably, two massive expeditions successfully reached the top of the highest Mt. Baekdu (2,744m/9,003ft) in 1740 and 1764. *Baekdudaegan*, or the

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Sky and Earth and operated in both human and object.

[94] The Confucian scholar Zhu Xi's (1130-1200) thesis *gwanmulchalgi* (觀物察己) epitomizes this empirical stance, meaning "by observing things one reflects the self."

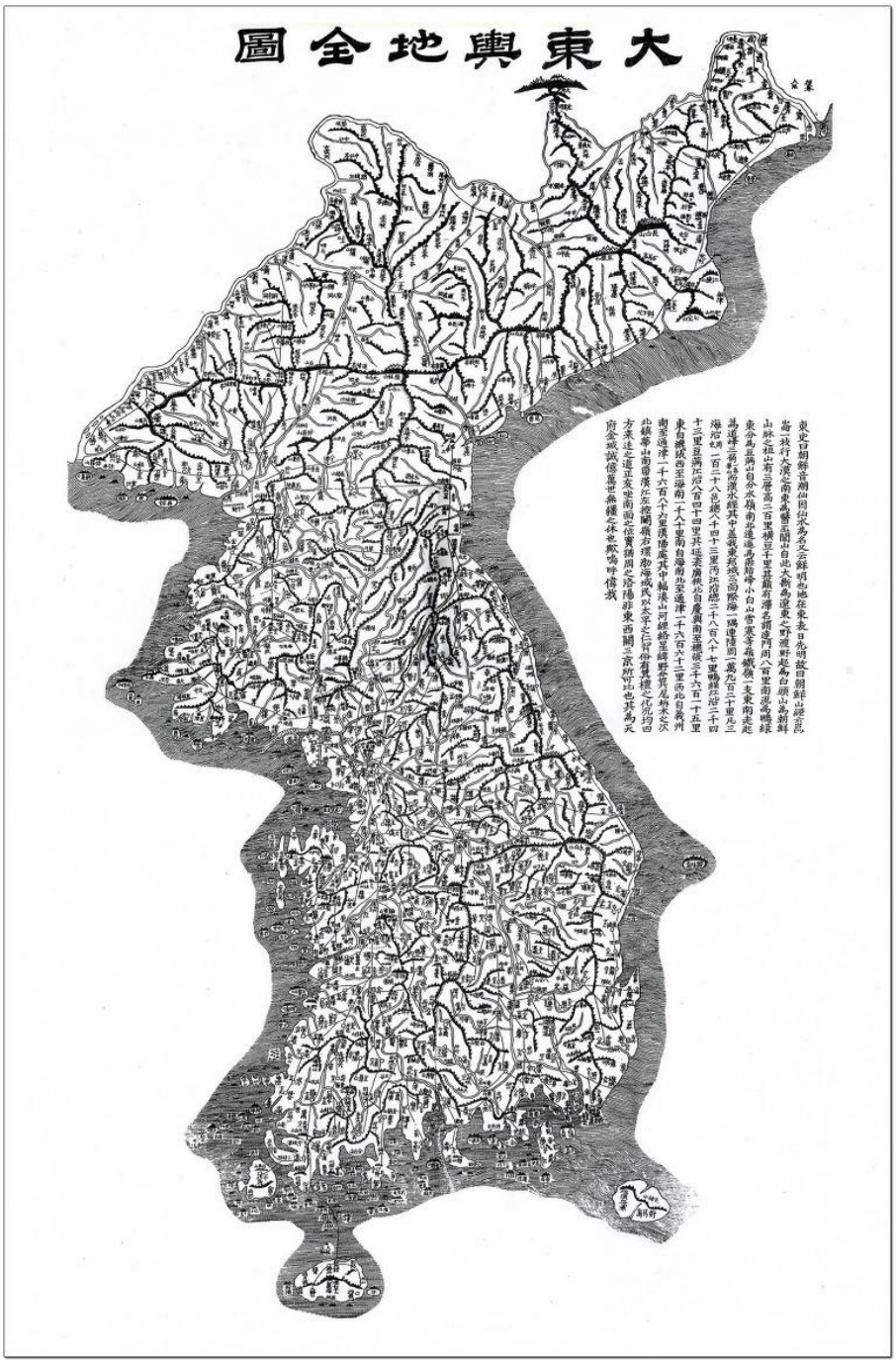


Figure 4-2. Daedong-yeojijeondo (1861) by the Geographer Jeong-Ho Kim. The nation is objectified on its territory, which is connected via ki flowing through the national mountain system, Baekdudaegan. The system starts from the highest mountain Baekdu (at the top of the map) and reaches all hills in the peninsula without being severed by a stream. Photo by the Kyujang-gak Museum.

concept of a national mountain system, was established in the eighteenth century.[95] Baekdudaegan refers to a geographical entity connecting, without being severed by a single stream, the peninsula's all mountain peaks and ridges from Mt. Baekdu, so-called "the mountain of the Korean soul." This systemization of the mountains of Korea called forth strong implications of patriarchy, age hierarchy, Korean ethnicity, and nationalism (Figure 4-2; Choi 2014: Ch.9).

In my view, the Neo-Confucian doctrine by this time came to the foreground of the Korean cosmic disposition, while both Taoist and Buddhist tenets, now gone pagan, were to remain in the background. The poet Je Im (1549-1587), for example, once a high-ranking government official, was known to be one of the earlier figures who resolutely cherished Korean nationalism, and his poems give special emphasis to this hierarchical relationship between the Neo-Confucian foreground and the Taoist-Buddhist background in his framing of nationalist, ethical, and naturalist agendas. Frustrated at the prevalent political strife, he retired to Sokri Mountain (one of the most popular myeongsans) and wrote many poems, including the following:

> The Way does not avoid man
> Yet man does avoid the Way
> Mountain does not leave earthly life
> Yet earthly life does leave the mountain.

[95] In the early period (15-6C) of the Joseon dynasty, the centralized authoritarian rule, on the grounds of "premodern globalization" in East Asia, required that a detailed body of geographic information

(道不遠人人遠道

山非離俗俗離山)

The "earthly life" here contrasts with the "mountain" as human ignorance does with the "Way" (*tao*[道] in Chinese, *do*[도] in Korean), the enigma of Taoism. The feuds, factions and political tricks he went through during his service were devalued as the symptoms of those who live an earthly life lacking a wisdom to stride along the rightful Way. Confucian moral principles fit well with the preexisting Taoist-Buddhist duality of mind/mountain and material/earthly-life. In this era, the mountain turned from an ideal place for becoming Taoist hermit into an ideal place that might potentially provide solutions for social dilemmas as well as philosophical riddles.

Among the Korean mountaineers of the 1970s through the 1980s, the historian and mountaineer Son's writing had been influential. In *Encyclopedia*, he argued, "Mountaineering is a sport one must engage in under a composed, introverted, and serious mindset. The mountaineer should reach the top with a clear recognition of the state of his strength, always mingling with the great nature and not defying against it" (Son 1978:1151). This kind of ethicizing mountaineering practices has constantly been issued as one of the main topics of debates related mountaineering feats and mountaineers' demeanor in various circles of Korean mountaineers. In fact, hundreds of Himalayan expedition reports published in South Korea may be characterized with

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throughout the peninsula be given greater attention. This resulted in the publications of maps and geographic research products.

hardships of climbing and expedition, relationships among the members, and reflective learning from all this. Mountaineering may potentially be a "good" business to engage in not merely because of somatic and psychical pleasures involved in the activities, but significantly because of moral virtues. Young-Seok Park, fourteen-peak summiteer, distinguishes exploration (*tamheom*) from adventure (*moheom*) and says,

> We are already used to enjoying adventure safely enough through elaborated simulations. Yet exploration is different. Seeking and inspecting an unknown world by facing risk is not merely for fun or thrill, but is a process of learning and practice to ponder oneself and to approach more deeply this world in which one lives. (Park 2003:139)

Park's claim of authenticity in favor of "exploration" tallies with what Im called "the Way" five centuries before. Adventure that is simulated, virtual, and devoid of a real risk is criticized as if a sort of the familiar comment on the commercialism of mountain tourism in the Himalayas. However, Park's distinction is not capitalism but Confucian. He is making the distinction between "exploration" and "adventure" not at the risk issue but at the learning process. In the learning, a mountaineer strategically goes through a series of physical, social, and musing processes by which they reflect themselves, sympathize with others, cultivate virtues, and thus realize better lives of one another, beyond the mountainscape and specific acts of climbing.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have identified a Korean cosmic disposition that is exhibited through Korean practices on the mountain throughout all historical period. The Korean

cosmic disposition regarding the mountain and mountain culture has shaped the foundation on which contemporary Korean mountaineers venture their projects and contend for authentic appeal. This founding process is not unilateral or mechanical; the disposition does not determine the course of actions on the mountain. Instead, it supplies a set of basic systems of knowing, acting, and mattering, systems in which members may contest or divulge from one another. The process further strengthens or transforms the grounding cosmic disposition. In other words, the foundational disposition itself plays as its own logic and does not primarily rely on "political," "economic," or other eurocentric sociological logics.

The disposition is tripartite: Confucian hierarchy, Buddhist duality, and Taoist idealism. The folding of the three parts is hierarchical: foundational duality and superhuman idealism constitute a background upon which Koreans conform to Confucian sociality in their enterprises, contentions, and visions ensuing in everyday lives and serious ventures. The development of Taoism based upon autochthonous geoecology furnished idealism by which Koreans envision self-perfection, wherein mountains are considered a central place of the self-perfection. The Korean tradition of Buddhism substantiated duality of mind and matter and a cosmic order of originality being located somewhere else. Seeking the self-perfection through undertakings of abstract meditation and physical hardships like venturing a geographical journey became an underlying formula at the heart of most serious social endeavors including mountaineering. Finally, all this self-cultivation in and outside mountains takes place via active

sympathy—sympathy formed by "reading" other's unspoken mind and not necessarily with obvious communications.

A Confucian question of mountaineering experiences, such as the "banality" I discovered on top of Mt. Everest, will go beyond asking the nature of the experiences or of the banality. Now I understand that the banality as I discovered at the moment of climbing kept lingering in my head because this kind of reflections mattered for me as a Korean mountaineer. In other words, seeking, imagining, and meditating of the moment made me to face such a nothing. Thus, it is a valuable question for a Confucian mountaineer to ask what mountaineering is for a mountaineer if he or she would fail to find out what was craved on the summit. A few weeks after the climb, I made a framed photo of myself standing on the top of Mt. Everest and gave it as a memento to the office of collegiate members of my alpine club which organized the successful expedition. Next to my signature on the photo, I wrote: "Let us climb the mountain of mind." This is not just esoteric but instructional, committing to all the three aspects of Korean cosmic disposition and envisioning Taoist superhuman ideal, Buddhist privileging of mind, and Confucian seniority wisdom. Of course, not all mountaineering is appreciated in this stereotyped fashion in the communities of Korean mountaineers; each experience of mountaineering is particular and can be abnormal. However, there are ongoing resonance and reciprocation between particularities and generalities. In the next chapter, I investigate the nature of cosmic process by examining experiential phenomena of Korean mountaineering ethnographically.

Chapter. 5 Confucian Koreans in the Hiamalays

5.1 Introduction: Cosmic Process of Korean Himalayan Mountaineering: Continuities and Transformations

In the scholarship on the history of Korean mountaineering, there is an ongoing question as to how contemporary practices of Korean mountaineering may be understood in relation to the cultures of mountain travel and climbing that flourished in the precolonial peninsula. G. Son has noted two massive national expeditions that successfully climbed to the top of Mt. Baekdu in 1740 and 1764, commenting on them applying "ancient practices of siege-tactics" (Son 2010:13) to their purpose of climbing. He suggested that these events are possibly connected to the climbs done in Western style in the country starting in the 1920s.[96] Between the two eras, however, there was apparently no continued apprenticeship nor transference of technical or tactical knowledge in terms of mountain climbing. Most techniques and tactics Korean mountaineers apply today are probably either adoptions from the West or local renovations of them. Regarding the historical understanding of Korean mountaineering, the point I make in this chapter does not deal with this mode of technical development but instead an underlying and enduring mode of praxis, or cosmic disposition. In

[96] A Tylorian unilinear view of historical development is widespread among the scholarship regarding mountain climbing in Korea. G. Son (2010) distinguishes the history into seven periods: a period of a "dawn" before the independence from the Japanese occupation; a period around the Korean war in the 1950s; a period of the popularization of mountain climbing in the 1960s; a period of remarkable mountaineering achievements in the 1970s; a period of fully developed abroad mountaineering in the 1980s; a period of "super" alpinism in the 1990s; and a period prospecting "new" visions in the 2000s.

particular, I focus on *cosmic process*, or reciprocal unfolding of manifested practices through the underlying cosmic disposition.

Briefly, cosmic disposition, as I have defined in previous chapters (§1.2, §4.2), sets up the basis from which epistemological, ontological, and ethical attributes launch their respective operations. Cosmic process, on the other hand, is an action that displays every first noticeable movement of these attributes and thus discharges their effect: by becoming activity exists, by knowing an entity is known, and by mattering ethics matter. Questions that aim to offer an understanding of the cosmic process should deal with the unfolding process without presuming its nature by certain epistemological, ontological, and ethical presuppositions. I do not claim that an anthropological viewpoint can be free from any presuppositions. However, one can at least keep away from introducing academic eurocentrism into a study of non-Western culture. In Chapter 3, I identified the eurocentric epistemology and ethics considered natural for Western visitors, which elicited at best apathetic reactions from the Nepalis. I called this tendency "anthromanticism." Avoiding anthromantic assumptions means to refrain from viewing humans as a set of the mind as separate from body, the body as separate from the community, and the community as a sum of the mind-body binaries. This individualism forms a common basis for both mountaineers' and scholars' eurocentric approaches to Himalayan mountaineering. In Chapter 4, I examined how Koreans have kept a distinctive set of basic presuppositions in their perception and understanding of the mountain and mountaineering. In doing so, I showed that the longstanding traditions of Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism in the peninsula are not merely ideological

discourses applied in accordance with economic, political, or other sociological logics, but the traditions are themselves the logics upon which they have modified themselves and continued by sustaining ideological expressions and practical applications.

Cosmic processes characteristic of Korean mountaineering unfold in three distinguishable dimensions: multifarious social relation, enlightenment appeal, and soul connection. In this chapter I explore each of these dimensions by examining historic and ethnographic cases. First, I describe a form of Korean group expedition that ordinarily comprises multiple levels of social relationship according to which an individual is stratified, as opposed to a social collection that is bluntly in conflict with an unconditional individuality. To inspect a variety of social settings in which an expedition is located, I examine a few events in the history of Korean mountaineering and also mountaineering expeditions in which I participated as a climber. Second, I discuss the enlightenment appeal with an example of making a false claim of summiting a Himalayan peak. Third, the soul connection is exemplified by two cases involving hallucinating mountaineers. Last, I attempt to identify ways in which Korean mountaineers' cosmic processes have led to a distinctive appreciation of Sherpas, considered to hold partial membership in a Korean expedition.

5.2 Seniority Wisdom and the Mountaineer's Gaze: Multifarious Individuality and Sociality

It was the last evening before departing from Base Camp for the final attempt of climbing the top of Mt. Everest. The leader of the 2013 Korean Everest-Lhotse

Expedition, Chang-Ho Kim, said to the other four Korean members, including myself, "Each of you should do your best and achieve your own goal while helping one another. The primary concern is that you follow the common goal of the expedition, especially safety, so that you support the general operation of the team" (May 16, 2013). The inevitable problem of individual climbers striving for mutually repellent goals, as has been explained by numerous Western mountaineers (§3.2.2; cf. Emerson 1966), is apparently discounted here. In the Korean expedition, the members kept each of their own climbing goals, endeavoring to successfully reach the summit with or without supplemental oxygen. The common goal, on the other hand, was also strategically set up by Kim, the oldest, articulated as the "general operation." If he were to be unable to assume the leadership position for some reason during the critical hours, then, "ordered" Kim, Chi-Young An, the second oldest, would succeed to the position; if An were to be unable, then the third oldest, myself, would succeed; and so on. At the base of his systemization of transferring leadership lies the Korean Confucian age-hierarchy. As one of the most basic social principles for Koreans, the hierarchy system is practiced by virtually all Korean mountaineers in forming climbing parties, mountaineering expeditions, alpine clubs, and mountaineering communities in the country. Moreover, in Kim's wary remark concerning the impending risk, the best result—keeping every member safe—was supposed to follow a sort of "collaborative individualism" exerted throughout the task. Ideally, the group formation does not at all conflict with, but supports, individual pursuits.



Figure 5-1. Korean members in the community tent of Base Camp in the 2013 Korean Everest-Lhotse Expedition. In this tent, taking off their shoes, Korean members ordinarily spend most of their daytime at the camp. This has been referred to as the "Korean style" of Base Camp setting. It has been exclusively used in most Korean Himalayan expeditions. May 16, 2013. Photo by the author.

This collaborative individualism calls for further attention with regard to cosmic processes of Korean Himalayan mountaineering. What is the relationship between collective gathering and individual pursuits, or, more abstractly, between sociality and individuality, as expressed by Korean Himalayan mountaineering? I argue that a Korean group expedition comprises multiple levels of social relationship, and the individual is stratified in accordance to each level. Beyond questioning the general structure of cosmic process, how have Korean mountaineers negotiated with and conformed themselves to multifarious sociality and stratified individuality? Broadly speaking, from the inception of Korean Himalayan mountaineering in 1962 to this day, the social formation Korean

mountaineers principally sustained has been changed from one largely determined by nationalism to the club-oriented groupism and later to the team-oriented groupism. Due to the limit of applicable data, however, it is not entirely clear how to identify the changing forms of the sociality-individuality relationship until the 1990s.

Nationalism has been a powerful ideology that provided one of the most significant rationales to Korean mountaineers from the outset of "modern" mountaineering in the late 1920s until recently. Throughout this period, national sentiment in the colonial Joseon dynasty and later in South Korea emphasized measuring athletic achievements in comparison to those of other countries, firstly Japan and later Western countries. This competitive manner that solidifies national identity has grown out of a particular Korean cosmic order that characterizes the modernization process of the twentieth-century Korean society, an order, beyond a mere product of national power game, built upon the widespread social evolutionism in East Asia—a prevailing theory of the world system that is supported by the underlying Confucian hierarchical perception of the world.

This hierarchical nationalism in East Asia demands careful attention, although I cannot allow enough space for this discussion. According to Young-Ha Ju and others (2006), contemporary Korean folklorists have kept a "colonial gaze" through which they interpreted Korean customs, succeeding Japanese ethnologists and officials who studied Korean culture in the 1930s and viewed it through a colonial, denigrating, and patronizing gaze. In fact, Japanese scholarship throughout the period of Meiji Restoration from the 1860s to the early twentieth century established such a viewpoint ordering

various cultures in terms of economic, military, and athletic development. Darwin was one of the strongest influences on Japanese thinkers and leaders of that era, including a few key players of Japanese mountaineering (Hood 2015). Thereafter, as they read, learned, and experienced everyday lives under the colonial system, Korean liberation activists in the late 1930s and early 1940s viewed the Korean public as being "second-class people" whereas Japanese were "first-class people" (Yeoksahak-yeon-guso 2004), naturalizing a national hierarchy in those and other terms of human development. The athletic fields were no exception (J. Cheon 2010; Jeong 2009).[97]

Koreans have employed this perspective when they consider achievements of mountaineering throughout the twentieth century. Japanese and British mountaineers introduced Western techniques of mountain climbing in Korea during the Japanese colonial occupation (1910-1945). The first Western form of rock climbing in the country was undertaken by British climber Clement Hugh Archer (1897-1966). During his service as the British Vice Consul in the country, his reports of climbs on sheer rock peaks near Seoul in the late 1920s illustrate several first ascents (Archer 1931; 1936). Since the 1930s, Koreans began participating in serious rock climbs and winter mountaineering throughout the peninsula, sometimes with friendly and sometimes with hostile

[97] It seems not only the case of mountaineering but the field of sports at large. K. Lee and others argue, "It is noteworthy that sport was used as a tool for colonialism and anti-colonialism. While Japan viewed sport as a tool to discipline the occupied, the Koreans attempted to reveal their nationalism through sporting events because it was the only public outlet that allowed them to express freely their resistance against Japan. Winning against Japan was not just about victory, but it signified national superiority and self-confidence" (K. Lee et al. 2015:458).

interactions with Japanese mountaineers they encountered on the mountain and elsewhere.[98]

[98] The wave of modern mountaineering in Japan began decades earlier than in Korea. Meanwhile, the problem of Korean mountaineering history I identified above is to be found in similar terms in the history of Japanese mountaineering. Kären Wigen observes that, in the late nineteenth century Japan, mountaineering served as a modern means to achieve enlightenment, propagated by the powerful memes of science, literature, imagination, and modernity (Wigen 2005). In particular, David Fedman (2009) overviews the early history of Japanese mountaineering and underlines a "complete change" in this period. One of the "most famous mountains" in Japan (see Fukada 2015[1964]), Yarigatake (3,180m/10,430ft) has been christened as "mountaineer's mountain" since the Kojima Usui's successful climb in 1902. This year was said to mark "the dawn of modern mountaineering" in Japan. Also, in 1919, Itakura Katsunobu became the first Japanese to ascent the mountain solo in winter, signaling a further step to new extremes. Fedman's perspective, however, basically submits the eurocentric man-versus-mountain framework. "Previous notions of reverence and awe that once tempered humankind's relationship with the mountains were," he argues, "forever changed by a new emphasis on the ability to subjugate or conquer the landscape, and the advent and advancement of winter mountaineering only further supported this notion" (Fedman 2009). By the incorporation of scientific attitude from the West, he theorizes, the gaze of Japanese to the mountain landscape was qualitatively changed from veneration to conquest. This view ignores the varieties of which modern mountaineers have envisioned ethics and high appeals by dedicating their practices for ideal or spiritual goals. Climbing to the top of a mountain peak has nothing to do with blaspheming the mountain, not only for Koreans but also for Japanese. In 2014, The Union of Asian Alpine Association (UAAA) adopted the Hiroshima Appeal, "Gratitude and Reverence to Mountains," declaring, "We first extend our gratitude and reverence to mountains and shall work with our best efforts to reduce strain on mountain areas and to preserve their environment" (Admin 2015). Kei Taniguchi, a Japanese female mountaineer and Himalayan veteran, proses in, "Being with the Mountain," her felt connection with the mountain as if it is an animated counterpart: "Whenever I go to the Himalaya, where people live near the mountains, I want to learn about their relationship to the place so that I can fell some of that connection, myself, before I step onto a peak … My initial doubts will turn into certainty if I can spend enough time simply being with the peak and contemplating it. At last, I'll know that the mountain will accept me. I'll sense it saying gently, *Come here*" (Taniguchi 2015:62).

For an additional note of Korean's neighbors, a brief look at the history of Chinese mountaineering will help understand the regional and historical context. A limited number of sources printed in English are currently available for the topic. Zhou Zheng and Liu Zhenkai's *Footprints on the Peaks: Mountaineering in China* (1995) provides an overview for the topic with a focus of the twentieth century. Also, the Chinese mountaineer Dongdong Yan's article, "Free Mountaineering: An Inside Look at Modern Chinese Alpinism" (Yan 2010), is a brief overview of evolution of contemporary high-altitude mountaineering practiced by Chinese and provides a cynicism against nationalist appropriation of the sport from an insider's point of view. It seems that, first of all, Chinese mountaineering has long been practiced under multiple nationalist agendas. The continuity between traditional geoecological perception of nature and the contemporary romantic appeal to the mountain found in South Korea seems to have been nonexistent in Chinese mountaineering. The first instance Chinese assimilated themselves with the modern form of mountaineering was unquestionably of an obvious political character, as the government of the USSR suggested China to make a joint expedition to Muztagh Ata (7,509m/24,636ft) in 1955, which "corresponded with the principle of mutual assistance and benefit between the two countries" (Zhou and Liu 1995:56). Similarly, mountaineering in USSR had been one of the national sports strategically

My concern for the present discussion is not what the Korean mountaineers of the period had in mind—which is hard to ascertain in any way—but how later historians look back on it. For example, in 1927, Seok-Yun Park became the first Korean to climb Mont Blanc. After the liberation of Korea in 1945, however, Park was listed among the Korean proponents of the Japanese ruling faction (*chin-ilpa*) and therefore sentenced to death. G. Son assents that Park's climb "paled into insignificance" and "negatively impacted the overall quality of [Korean] mountaineering history, because of the pro-colonial line he supported" (Son 1999:106). Reviewing all-Korean technical climbs and their reports under the Japanese colonial occupation, on the other hand, Son concludes that these climbs became "the feats registering the spirit and mind of the nation" (*gyeore-eui eolgwa tteuseul gochui*; Son 1999:102-3). In the same vein, Jeong-Tae Kim (1916-1988), one of the most active mountaineers in the 1930-40s Korea, called Baekryeong-hoe (literally "white hill club"), one of the Korean-exclusive mountaineering clubs in the era, an "independence movement association" (*dokrip-undong gyeolsache*) (J. Kim 1988).[99]

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promoted under the Stalin rule (Horsman 2009; Maurer 2009). With a series of international politics and conflicts among USSR, Taiwan and other Western countries, the People's Republic of China took exclusion from the International Olympic Committee from 1955 to 1975 (Brownell 2008: Ch.5). In any case, there has been little historical connection between Chinese and Korean mountaineers partly due to political reasons as well as to the virtual non-existence of mountaineering culture in China. Even in the 1990s when 24 Korean expeditions climbed peaks inside China's territory, there seemed little, if any, interaction between the mountaineers of the two countries. Then, Union Asian D'Alpinisme Association (UAAA) was formed in 1994 mainly under the collaboration between mountaineering administrators of South Korea and Japan. In 2008, a number of Koreans (instructors of Kolon Alpine School) climbed icefalls with local Chinese climbers in Sichuan Province. In the same year, Corean Alpine Club (CAC), Chinese Mountaineering Association (CMA), and Japan Alpine Club (JAP) launched the annual program of "Students Exchange Program through Mountaineering in China, Japan, and Korea." In 2015, the Kolon Mountaineering School in South Korea opened a branch in China and began instructions for Chinese climbers.

[99] According to G. Son (2008), Baekryong-hoe was formerly Geum-yohoe, meaning Friday club, founded around 1935 or 1936 and membered by Korean Seoul citizen-climbers (not Japanese). This club was renamed so around in October 25, 1937. He recollected that the club's founding member and president

In short, in the late twentieth century, notable events of Korean mountaineering and rock climbing under the colonial regime were accounted for primarily as nationalist enterprises.[100]

The mountaineering feat that arguably most clearly demonstrated the national sentiment was the successful 1977 Korean Mt. Everest expedition.[101] The Korean

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Heung-Seop Um had been acquainted with Dongwan Hyeon and Seokha Song, both of whom became the presidents of Corean Alpine Club after the liberation and who engaged in Jindanhakhoe, a Korean nationalistic history academy founded in 1934 in opposition to Japanese colonialist interpretation of Korean history and culture. The first climbing club in Korea was Joseon Alpine Club (Joseon Sanakhoe), founded in 1931 by Japanese climbers.

[100] A number of Korean historians have delved into the Japanese colonial past, and the historians of mountaineering are no exception. However, it seems that they largely overstate Korean nationalism as a historical fact under the Japanese colonial regime. Interpretations of mountaineering practices of this period have tended to regard the sport as a means of asserting the ideological disposition of the group. To be sure, the mountaineers drew their ideology conspicuously to the unclimbed rock peaks. Many of the writings of Korean nature lovers, for example, describe the triumphant vigor on the nationalized high mountains and the sympathy with impoverished villagers under the social turmoil of Japanese colonial regime. For example, the nationalist activist Jae-Hong An (1891-1965) made an expedition to Mt. Baekdu, the highest mountain in Korea, and published his travelogue in the newspaper *Chosun Ilbo*. Later he published the series as a monograph, and he begins the preface of the book, saying, "A travel is not leisurely. It is a necessity for the world that you climb a high mountain, breathe in the immense vigor of Cheonji (the crater-lake on top of the mountain), and raise grandeur spirits. Moreover, it is the most important duty for social persons that you witness the actual scenes in which people and things continue their lives throughout urban and rural areas, mountains and wilderness, and that you inspect how they have been changed throughout time past and present. This is why travel is necessary and travelogue is valuable" (An 2010[1931]:5). However, whether the events of mountaineering practiced by Koreans in the period were unanimously of a nationalist project remains ambiguous. A similar case may be found for their neighbors. Japanese nature lovers before the outbreak of World War II seemed to have similarly applied the natural landscape in Japan and their "harmony between man and nature" to political movements of the period. Martin Hood, the translator of the Japanese mountaineer Kyūya Fukada's bestselling anthology, *One Hundred Mountains of Japan* (2015[1964]), writes, "[T]he exuberant celebration of Japan's nature … was channeled into a narrow chauvinism. Nature itself had been mobilized for total war" (Hood 2015:36). To this national appeal, Japanese mountaineers did not necessarily take to the regimentation of their sport, and some mountaineers apparently felt a divergence between the nationalist orientation and mountaineers' own zeal. In a chapter on Mt. Takashiho, Fukada writes, "But times have changed. While it would have been unthinkable in prewar Japan to climb the mountain in anything other than a spirit of deep reverence, the bonds of this repressive ethos have now fallen away. We can now climb this cheerful southern peak and enjoy this land of legends to our heart's content" (2015:239). It is reasonable to imagine a similar ambiguous mentality persisting with some of the mountaineers and nature lovers who sought solitude in the middle of the wide social turmoil of early- and mid-twentieth century Korea.

[101] From 1977 to 2014, 754 Koreans in 79 expeditions undertook attempts to reach the top of Mt. Everest,

government substantially supported financial matters for launching the expedition. Even more outstanding was its aftermath. Media representations, exhibitions, public lectures and celebration and commemoration gatherings were followed across the country time after time. The achievement has been greatly acclaimed in and outside of Korean mountaineering communities to date.[102]

Since the late 1990s, however, few of Korean mountaineering expeditions have related their performances to national achievement. During my research period, for example, no climber waived the Korean national flag on top of the peaks they reached among the nine Korean Himalayan expeditions in which I participated, a custom once considered the norm until around the turn of the century. Still in most transnational affairs of the Korean society, nationalism, as well as national boundary, persists as an objective social condition—*potential objectivities* (§2.5); however, it is no more an

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whereby 131 people made the mission successful. This number is the seventh largest after Nepal (2,264), the US (536), China (299), the Great Britain (264), Japan (169) and India (152). To take the whole, from 1962 to 2014, in total 4,670 Koreans in 670 expeditions climbed on mountains in Himalaya and Central Asia. Death rate is significantly high (1.73%) and 81 Koreans in the same period perished on the high mountains. Note that the numbers refer to incidents, not individuals. That is, for example, 13 Koreans climbed more than once among the 131 successful ascents. In terms of Nepal, 787 Nepalis made up the 2,264 ascents. Most of them are Sherpas. The numbers of non-Korean Everest summiteers are up to September 24 of 2011, as compiled by the German Eberhard Jurgalski (2015). The numerical data of the Korean mountaineering are based on S. Nam (1998; 1962 through 1997), S. Nam's compilation (1998 through 2000), and Korean Mountaineering Annual (J. Kim 2000; 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; Oh 2006; 2007; 2008; 2009; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013a; 2014; 2015b).

[102] The budget of the Korean Everest expedition in 1977 was twelve-hundred million won, half of which the government sponsored; eleven corporations under the contract of a newspaper company sponsored fifty million won; and the Korean Alpine Federation (KAF), which organized the expedition, sponsored ten million won. The success of this expedition, especially with its national exaltation and glory, has been noted unanimously as the greatest event in the history of (modern) Korean mountaineering. Most mass media had continued praise for days; the climbers and two of the Sherpa climbers as well were awarded medals; photography and equipment exhibitions took place in seven cities for several months and even in six cities of the US for two months; presentations and talks took place for ninety-four times throughout the country; KAF appointed September 15th, the day summit was made as Mountaineer's Day; and more (see Fig. 2; cf. B. Kim 2008).

outstanding feature of Himalayan mountaineering for contemporary Korean mountaineers. Nonetheless, without standing up for the national sentiment, Koreans' mountaineering accomplishments may still be granted ethnic interest as opposed to national interest. For instance, Dae-Hun Yun begins the photographic collection, "A Hundred Scenes of History of Korean Mountaineering," by stating, "The moments of crying, laughing, cheering, resenting, praying and clapping together. What has happened to us? Here are the hundred scenes" (Yun 2010:160). In his remark, an event of climbing would be not solely of concern to the mountain climber(s) but meaningfully to "us" (*uri*), here ambiguously indicating members of the imagined Korean mountaineering community or Korean citizens in general (since the publication was part of an issue of a nationwide magazine), a pronoun used frequently in everyday contexts and signals pseudo-familial solidarity in various groupings.[103]

Likewise, most of the Korean mountaineers with whom I worked were keenly aware of how other Koreans were doing on mountains in the Himalayas and elsewhere, of the progressions and conclusions of their expeditions, and of the climbs' media representations to the Korean society. For example, the claim to be "the first Asian climbing all fourteen eight-thousand-meter peaks without using oxygen" had initially been one of the slogans the leader Kim set forth to his anticipated achievement at the 2013 Mt. Everest expedition. However, two Kazakhstan nationals already succeeded climbing all of the fourteen peaks with no oxygen. Before beginning of the climb, I and

[103] Korean psychologists invented the term "weism" (*urijeui*), by which if a person designates another under the frequent designation of uri, then it would assume the pseudo-familial solidarity between the one designates and the other that is designated (see J. Choi 2007).

Chi-Young An raised this issue, and, after a day of thought, Kim decided to take the slogan out. He simply had not regarded the white-skinned Kazakhstanis as Asian. An told me, "If he won't correct this, this would affect the sponsorships from Mont-bell (Korea branch) and KBS (Korea Broadcasting Station) he's receiving now" (April 2, 2013).[104] This shows that Kim and An are, possibly differently, attentive to the record-making value of their achievements to Korean society.

While recently the national boundary has been relinquished to a rather insignificant social domain for contemporary Korean mountaineers, boundaries of club and of expedition now more fittingly displaying social relations of Korean mountaineers and play a major role driving the dynamics of Korean Himalayan mountaineering cosmic processes. Among the nine expeditions in which I participated during my research, two of the three Mt. Everest expeditions were organized along club-based lines. Among the nine, further, the most notable three expeditions—in Korean mountaineering communities, celebrated for their exceptional achievements—were not club-based but forged with a strong team-oriented sentiment. The following observations of some of these expeditions will help understand the interplays between sociality and individuality.

5.2.1 Purism and Club Orientation: The 2012 CALSAC SNU Mt. Everest Expedition

The idea and organization of this expedition were prompted and propelled mainly by a collaboration of a few senior members of the College of Agriculture Life Science

[104] The total budget of this expedition was about six hundred thousand dollars, which was solely sponsored by the Korean branch of Mont-bell, an outdoor apparel and equipment company. At the

Alpine Club at Seoul National University (CALSAC SNU). Founded in 1963, the club consisted of around two hundred members in 2012. Like most university alpine clubs in South Korea, members of CALSAC SNU were proud of keeping a pseudo-familial close companionship among themselves. By launching the expedition, the club planned to commemorate its fiftieth anniversary as of 2012. It took five years for the preparation of the expedition, as a course of which three climbing members were appointed in November 2011. By carrying on a lot of work such as sending mails and emails, talking through the phone, soliciting club members, and lobbying businessmen, the expedition planning committee was able to procure enough sponsorship to launch the expedition from over one hundred twenty agents—corporations, organizations and individuals (mostly the club members)—that donated a total of $224,000. No obligation required climbing members to contribute for this.

Yun-Seop Seo, the general director of the committee, explained at a committee meeting why Mt. Everest could be the best climbing destination for the commemorative expedition. He said,

> Students of Seoul National University are known to be very bad at sports [in contrast to the reputation of their intellect]. But, imagine, they climbed the top of Mt. Everest! Besides, for most people who don't know well about Himalayan mountaineering, Makalu or K2 [which were once considered possible options] would have little difference between the two. (January 5, 2012)

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moment, KBS (Korea Broadcasting Station) is a national media and its three staff members were following the expedition to film the journey.

For Seo, climbing Mt. Everest, as opposed to other peaks, was significant because of the mountain's reputation to the wider society, rather than the climb's internal properties such as fun, difficulty, creativity, risk challenging or others. Club members were well aware of the mountaineer's creed of "attitude rather than altitude"—meaning that climber should pursue the difficulty of the climb rather than the height of the mountain, a dictum popularized to the Korean mountaineering communities by publications of Young-Do Kim, the leader of the 1977 Korea Mt. Everest expedition. "Of course," admitted Gil-Haeng Heo, the then president of the club, "for expert mountaineers reaching the top of Mt. Everest would not be very significant since hundreds of people do it every year" (Everest Climbing Committee 2012). However, Heo envisioned that what matters for the club members was the collaborative nature of the project rather than the technical quality of the climb. He said, "I believe it is doubtlessly significant that members of a simple [*sunsu*, literally pure] university club collected a huge amount of fund and that, with friendship and passion, the amateur members climbed to the top of the world-highest mountain while continuing their own study" (Everest Climbing Committee 2012). His statement illustrates that the value of mountain climbing may also be found in its capacity to motivate amateurist, club-oriented modes of community formation. The climb's technical quality, as well as other individual experiential aspects, is outside his consideration. In fact, the three climbing members—Jeong-Hwan Seo, Seon-Pil Yoo, and I—were all students, and I, the oldest and most experienced among the three, took the climbing leader position.[105]

[105] J. Seo received his master degree in agronomy a month before the expedition departed, and decided

This rhetoric of amateurism and club orientation has been popular among the members of dozens of university alpine clubs in Korea from the middle of 1960s onward. At the heart of this movement lay the purism. Since the 1960s, climbing and mountaineering in South Korea were no longer an exclusive vocation of a small circle of high-class high school and university student climbers. Instead, it became a popular sport open to the public. Non-college clubs began to be founded in the early 1960s, and some of their members freely sought technical difficulty by engaging in rock climbing, rather than ridge mountaineering or gorge climbing which had been major forms of mountaineering until then—the transformation of climbing style from, Son (2010) called, "line climbing" (*seon deungban*) to "point climbing" (*jeom deungban*). Under this diversifying stratification of climbers' circles, members of the university alpine clubs in the late 1960s began to speak of purity (*sunsu*) on climbing as well as club activities. The metaphor and its practices sprang up in the context of schismogenetic development of mountaineers' circles.[106] In that era, focuses of two nationwide mountaineering organizations—Corean Alpine Club (CAC) and Korean Alpine Federation (KAF)—lay

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to postpone for a semester taking his entrance exam for the doctoral program at the same lab. Yoo was a senior and took a leave of absence for the semester.

[106] Jung-Gi Choi describes the background of the time, "Corean Alpine Club [CAC] had interest in popularizing mountaineering and Korean Alpine Federation [KAF] sought to render it as a sport genre. This derived the younger generations in college clubs felt a sense of antipathy … Pure undergrad students found it hard to engage in activities of either organization. Still worse, other mountaineering clubs began undertaking climbs more actively than ever, driving college mountaineering relatively shrunk. Mountaineering became popularized, resulting in degrading the culture of mountaineering and deteriorating environmental pollution. Gradually, these formed a sense of crisis about mountaineering in general" (J. Choi 2015:35). This movement parallels the critical movement in the society at large. Son describes, "There was an estrangement against the obstinacy, more than competition, between the two organizations. Also, hostility was raised to the practice of forming committee based on social and financial backgrounds. On top of this, the mountaineering community also faced the distrust against the older generation, which was epidemic to the society at large" (Son 2010:179).

on technical development and public events. A shared discontent on the part of traditional mountaineers against these public-oriented activities triggered the foundation of Korea Student Alpine Federation (KSAF) in 1971. One of the founding members of KSAF, Gwang-Yeong Kim, defined the purism as "a pure ideology, colorless and odor-free, distinctively to the existing dual organizations" (G. Kim 2015:39).

Certainly, the rhetoric of purism, amateurism, and club orientation is by no means obvious principles sought by contemporary Korean mountaineers, for many of the Korean Himalayan expeditions in the research period obviously pursued technical difficulty in conceiving their climbs. However, they capture the foundational rationale in launching the CALSAC SNU Mt. Everest expedition. The rhetoric has continued to this day with little transformation through the identity of the club and by the still active senior members. The eleventh of the Yun's collection in "Hundred Scenes" listed the first notable death of a Korean mountaineer. This was twenty-eight-year-old Taek Jeon who was leading a five-membered CAC expedition to Mt. Hanra (the highest mountain in South Korea) in 1948.[107] Organized during the social turmoil right after the liberation in 1945, the national club had kept a pack of mountaineers already well experienced, under broad guidelines such as to "rightfully establish mountain culture," "make efforts for social purification," and "enhance national sentiment" (Son 2010:96). For some, the expedition leader's death was certainly a significant loss to Korean mountaineering at large. One of the CALSAC SNU senior members, Kenny Kim, mentioned the national

[107] The first fatal accident recorded in the history of modern mountaineering in Korea was the missing of the Japanese student Maegawa Doshiharu, a member of the Alpine Club of Keijō Imperial University (a Japanese university founded in contemporary Seoul), during retreating from Mt. Hanra on January 3th in

sentiment surrounding his death and its connection to CALSAC SNU, as he narrated his participation in the funeral of T. Jeon:

> At the funeral, people gathered and talked in whispers, "He's gone. Who shall succeed him? Who will lead the Korean mountaineering society (*han-guk sannakgye*)?" "It's Dam, Dam should do it for him." Dam Jeon was a nephew of Taek Jeon. Although he was still a high-school student, he was stout and climbed rocks quite well already. From the beginning [of CALSAC SNU's foundation in 1962], members of CALSAC SNU did not engage in such stuffs [of the national organizations]. We're used to say, "Instead of doing something outside, let's focus on our own things." To Dam's eyes, this must have been good. He liked the members of our club. (Personal conversation, June 11, 2015)

Dam Jeon entered Seoul National University and, as expected, played a significant role in the 1950s Korean mountaineering. Kim's comment secures the historical authenticity of the club with its connection to Dam Jeon (whose nephew is also one of the earliest members of CALSAC SNU). Based on this social authenticity, on the other hand, the comment justifies the club-oriented and amateurist rhetoric. The club, as well as most other university alpine clubs in the country, was established in the privilege of brotherhood exclusively to the club members over individual performances ever popularized through activities outside the club.This characteristic exclusiveness of the community sentiment allowed the expedition committee to collect the great amount of money from the club members. Moreover, it also allowed them to dismiss the concern around the relatively low technical quality in climbing Mt. Everest today.[108]

1936.

[108] The purism as a metaphor has long served as an identity marker for those who held the membership of a number of what were referred as "authentic mountaineering clubs," as opposed to, for a recent example, so-called "Internet mountaineering clubs," the web-based clubs similar to Meet-ups in the US. A

5.2.2 Multifarious Connection of Individuality to Sociality under Age Hierarchy

I have explained so far some of major values attached to Korean mountaineering, values including nationalism and purism, as they indicate social relationships especially in reference to the world outside the mountaineers' circles. Exclusiveness of the community sentiment is a characteristic feature of the social structure of Korean cosmic process. However, the relationship between the sociality and individuality is still in question: How would individual motivation and decision making conform to, contrast with, or co-occur with sociality? For example, Seok-Ju Wu, a twenty-six-year-old member of the 2013 Korea Lhotse South Face Expedition, narrated to me, right after returning to Kathmandu from this unsuccessful expedition, the circumstances of his participation of the climb and the course of his thought progression throughout the expedition. The expedition consisted of seven Korean climbers, all of whom were

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popular pejoration has been that the members would call each other with their nick names instead of real names, thus not caring much about partners' safety; of course, this degradation of those recently popularized forms of hiking or rock-climbing groupings has gained deserved criticisms (Min 2015). Meanwhile, the popular authenticity claim was indeed not a significant metaphor for Korean Himalayan mountaineers, as much as serious Himalayan mountaineering is believed for them to require commitments on mountaineering, and this premise tells everyone that all Himalayan mountaineers are authentic. Beyond this naturalized assumption, most Korean Himalayan mountaineers are indeed members of more or less "authentic mountaineering clubs," that is, the clubs with decades of history. They are all "authentic" from the beginning, whether or not their Himalayan climbs aim high quality mountaineering. Every feat may potentially be "pure," with only the exception of the tarnish of commercialism. For example, joining an agency-organized Mt. Everest expedition on his own, a Korean mountaineer who was a long-time member of what could be called an "authentic" mountaineering club wished to be a member of a "normal" Everest expedition, instead of a "commercial expedition" (Personal conversation with Kim Chang-Ho, May 8, 2013). Thus, the 2013 Everest expedition of the three climbers including him, being more of a commercial nature in its formation and progression, was named "2013 Korea Dream Everest Expedition" with no Korean guide—by strategically placing this expedition throughout the expedition period next to the Chang-Ho Kim's expedition in order to be spontaneously guided from its experienced members if needed—although having a Korean guide had initially been considered.

members of university alpine clubs. Wu was the second youngest among them. The Lhotse South Face has been known to mountaineers over the world as one of the most difficult Himalayan faces to climb, and the leader Seong-Taek Hong had long dreamed of making an attempt on it. Wu narrated,

> Initially I had planned to join the Manang Gang-il (a peak in China) expedition this autumn. But I didn't and instead was thinking to go back to school. [He was on leave] Then, Seong-Hoon Eun called me, talked about the Lhotse expedition, and suggested me join it. He asked me to just come to a preparation meeting of the next week. I said yes, without a clear intention to join. After his call, I thought about it a lot. I talked about it with my parents, and they were unhappy with the idea.
>
> The next week I went to the meeting, and there I said, "I don't think I have a strong motivation to join." But the leader asked me, "Let's do it together." I further thought a lot about it again. On the one hand, climbing the South Face looked great. Setting the ladders on the Ice Fall by ourselves also sounded fun. On the other hand, all the members looked very good to me. By the time when we met together I did not know them well, and yet I thought, "Climbing together with them would be a great idea." So I decided to join.
>
> When I finally arrived at Base Camp, however, I regretted a lot. "I came here again! The same place!" [The Base Camp of Lhotse shares that of Mt. Everest, which he climbed twice earlier the year and the last year][109] Also, even though you set up all the route by yourself, climbing back and forth was indeed boring and I was getting myself tired. I felt regret about my decision, but didn't talk it to anyone. "Why did I come again? Did I really want to do this?" After all however, my conclusion to join this expedition was that "I came here only because of the people." I didn't have any inclination toward the mountain itself. Now I feel that everything was fun there. (Personal conversation, November 18, 2013)

[109] In fact, the expedition climbed not Lhotse South Face but Lhotse West Face, which shares the majority of its route with that of the normal route to the top of Mt. Everest from the south. Their plan was firstly to set up the route as well as acclimatize at the easier West Face and secondly to attempt an alpine-style climb through the South Face and climb down through the would-be safer West Face route. Due to a severe weather condition, the expedition was forced to retreat and withdrew with no attempt on South Face.

In his recollection of the expedition, the notion "climbing together with good people" is outstanding and, for a mountaineer's motivation of joining an expedition, may potentially gain more currency than the "inclination toward the mountain." These two perceptions of mountaineering experience aim each distinctive experiential arena, respectively: team-oriented companionship and individual psychic and somatic attraction of climbing. In Wu's case, the former can redeem the weakness of the latter.

First of all, the individual attraction of climbing is indubitably a significant part of Korean mountaineers' motivation of climbing and source of joy. After arrival of Base Camp, for example, Chi-Young An, then the leader of 2013 Amphu I (6,840m/22,441ft) first-ascent expedition in which I was a climbing member, described the impression he gained from the mountain and the landscape surrounding it. He said, "Amphu-Tso (the lake at the foot of Amphu I) is certainly more sacred than other lakes because even though it doesn't flow, fresh water gushes out from below, not accumulated by rain or others. Also, Amphu I is obviously more beautiful than other peaks around here" (Personal conversation, October 6, 2013). This individual attraction to a particular mountain is like an interpersonal affection, as Chang-Ho Kim compared, "Mountain is a woman standing in front of a man" (Personal conversation, June 11, 2013). I suggest that the ethico-ontological continuity characteristic of Koreans (§4.3) supplies the possibility that a particular mountain and landscape may attract a mountaineer. Moreover, this affection is not simply attraction of a general kind, but an attraction through what I call a "mountaineer's gaze." Pointing to a triangular-shaped peak named Melang-Phulang East near Amphu I, An said, "That peak looks so great. To climb the ridge of this side looks

the easiest" (Personal conversation, October 12, 2013). Through the mountaineer's gaze, a mountain is primarily seen in terms of the prospect of climbing on it.

The mountaineer's gaze matures by trying to see particular aspects of mountains through it and is thereby naturalized to a mountaineer. For example, seven Koreans of the 2013 Kolon-Sport Alpine School Himalayan Mountaineering Program arrived at the Langtang Lirung Base Camp in northern Nepal during an acclimatization walk from a nearby village. Having a lunch break, they shared their impressions of the surrounding landscape including the enormous, sheer South Face of Langtang Lirung (7,234m/23,734ft). Three students (in their 30s, 40s, and 50s each) seemed simply daunted; two senior instructors described the obvious ridge-line through which previous expeditions climbed; and, Ki-Seok Seo, another instructor who exceptionally climbed peaks and mountains in the areas of Himalaya and Karakoram previously unknown to Korean mountaineering circles, asked me, "Where do you think Tomaž Humar attempted his climb on this wall?" (November 6, 2013) Tomaž Humar (1969-2009) was a renowned Slovenian mountaineer who died during his solo attempt of the wall in 2009; few details were known so far about his death (Personal conversation with Rodolphe Popier). In fact, we were taking a rest next to his memorial stone at the campground. While no one else showed interest in the details of his climb, Seo and I described and discussed the possible line through which the 2,500-meter face could be climbed, alone. During our conversation, one of the then frequent avalanches swept over the face through the line both of us had agreed upon. This left us dazed but none of the others were affected. We

had to admit our fault, revising the imagined route in a bit different direction so as to avoid the hazard that must have killed the Slovenian.

This mode of individual attraction that is supplied by the mountaineer's gaze is notwithstanding by no means a necessary factor for Korean mountaineers to attempt a climb and especially for junior members of an expedition. After the successful attempt to the top of Amphu I, Young-Mi Kim, the youngest among the three, narrated her feeling of the overall climb, saying, "I just trusted you two, and so I had simply thought that things should be going well" (Personal conversation, October 11, 2013). The climb was in the alpine style, that is, climbing without fixing a rope on the route or setting up a permanent camp on the mountain; because this style has long been considered a better form of climbing a Himalayan peak in mountaineering communities of the West (§3.2.2), since around the turn of the twenty-first century, many of those in Korean mountaineering communities began to privilege climbs in the alpine style over those in the siege-tactics such as on the normal route of Mt. Everest. The Amphu I expedition was acclaimed in Korean mountaineering communities, awarded the Park Young-Seok Prize of the year, and further nominated for the Piolets d'Or 2014 into the "big list" of seventy five ascents made over the world in 2013. However, Kim, who was also amply experienced in climbing Himalayan peaks, discounted the notion by saying, "Style is just a style." What was a matter for her was being together and forming companionship, as she said, "I was happy because we were able to get together and do something together—breathing together, sweating together, and being together. These are great, aren't they?" Yet, the minimalist style of climbing turned out to be not so much

satisfactory regarding the companionship, as she said, "I had expected that we would have become closer to one another after the climb [but we have not]" (Personal conversation, October 26, 2013). We talked more on this aspect of mountaineering and reached a conclusion that the three days of climbing offered to us too limited a chance to form a deeper relationship as a team.

Thus, powerful sentiments can emerge out of certain social dynamics that are deeply rooted in each individual's primary perception of the world. Motivation for climbing—what one might call "the innermost feeling" for serious mountaineers—is no exception to this tendency.[110] For Korean mountaineers, an attraction to a particular mountain and to a prospective climb is based upon social relationships that are variegated by historical formations of team, club, mountaineering community and wider society. As Y. Kim expected, the extraordinary companionship and a Durkheimian organic solidarity

[110] Leader of the successful 1986 Korean K2 (8,611m/28,251ft) expedition, Byeong-Jun Kim analyzed the practice of Reinhold Messner, justifying his disliking of the Italian and explaining the source of a greater joy in his own practice: "[Messner] prefers to walk alone … he dislikes if he can see anyone … This is why I do not regard him highly, although I respect him as a mountaineer … Of course, walking alone on this bleak-most glacier is good as it allows you to calmly reflect yourself alongside a peculiar excitement. The feeling is certainly more intense than and different from one you would feel when you walk together with others. However, it is more pleasing that you are with your mountain friends whom you love and with whom you may share even death. It is a great joy that you see them while you walking alone and meditating (B. Kim 1989:76)." For him, the "best team" he imagined for long was realized with the K2 expedition in which the members created "best mountaineering" with "best teamwork" (B. Kim 1989:239). His evaluation of the shared teamwork certainly reflects most of the individual members' mentality of the group, as the official report collects the diaries of each member and supplies ample descriptions from differing viewpoints, though there must have been a selection process for a nicer representation as it is. In fact, this was quite a new and revolutionary form of reporting at that time. Also, in comparison to the Korean group, a number of other Western mountaineers who climbed the same mountain were viewed in the eyes of B. Kim and other members as immoral. For example, Wanda Rutkewicz, the Polish mountaineer who became the first woman to reach the top of K2, irritated the Koreans by not expressing any gratitude to them, even though she was helped and nursed at a Korean camp when she was exhausted during her climb down. Kurt Diemberger, a renowned Austrian mountaineer, also did not express deserved gratitude for the help he received, neither did another Italian mountaineer who gave up his climb because he fell in conflict with his leader and was helped by Koreans (B. Kim 1989:77, 144-5).

shared by all members of a group have constituted one of the most significant values attributed to expeditionary mountaineering expeditions for Koreans.

In this practice of mountaineering, individual incongruities are threats to collective, ideal harmony of the group and need to be suppressed. Hiding mismatched feelings is an important social skill, constituting dynamics of micro sociality in an expedition. Wu, then one of the ten Koreans in the 2012 Peace Expedition, expressed in his blog (Wu 2014) more than a year after the expedition a "sense of freedom" that he felt during his lone stay in Camp Two for a night.

He had been climbing in a pair with a senior mountaineer, and, as they arrived back at the camp after an acclimatization climb, he pretended, he noted, that he was too tired to climb further down to Base Camp and asked the senior to allow him to stay there one more day, alone. He describes his feeling and notes, "Strangely, I felt loneliness, but the sense of freedom was greater … At the next day, I felt a great aversion against the thought that I had to go down; however, as I arrived at Base Camp, I expressed greetings pretentious of missing them so much, as if the single day was felt like a month long" (Wu 2014).[111]

The senior mountaineer who parted from Wu at Camp Two and climbed down to Base Camp alone, candidly described his impression of Wu to other members at the evening gathering of the community tent, saying, "he looks like not matching with me," a

[111] In this article, he is describing his experience of being completely alone on the Everest massif and comparing this with that of Messner described in his book (2003). Including this book (*Die weiße Einsamkeit*), a number of Messner's books were translated into Korean by Yeong-Do Kim. Being the leader of the historic 1977 Korean Everest Expedition, Y. Kim had an incomparable authority among Korean mountaineers and his appeal to Messnerian individualist, meditational approach to mountaineering has gained a great attention in the mountaineering community.

euphemistic negative evaluation in terms of his social skills (September 30, 2012). Expressions of individual peculiarity, anti-community sentiment, or enmity to another member have to be concealed from some, but not everyone. Wu expressed that private and nonconformist feeling in his blog and published it, the occasional readers of which included, as he knew, myself as well as several younger mountaineers. During the expedition, too, Wu expressed his complaints against the leader and other seniors to other younger members including me. This tendency of practicing unequal, multifarious social relationships was more or less identical to everyone in the expedition, as some Koreans were willing to talk to me—the forth oldest among the ten—about their displeasure against someone else, while a few, especially the youngest, were not.

The dynamic practices of the two contrasting sentiments—consonance and antagonism—were noticeable among the Korean mountaineers in most of the expeditions in my research. The single exception was the Langtang Wanderers 2014, in which the members were only two including myself and Jin-Seok Kim; in this expedition, it was myself who determined crucial expedition decisions, as if my mountaineer's gaze worked better than his. Meanwhile, the antagonism cannot be thought of as separated from the consonance. For example, Purna Jeon, the single female and youngest in the five-membered 2013 Korea Everest-Lhotse Expedition, asked my opinion after a breakfast one morning. At the breakfast table, she had been harshly scolded by the leader—Chang-Ho Kim—because of her recurring mistakes, and thus she came up with an idea, she consulted me, of giving up her own summit attempt. She felt both feelings at the same time towards the elder members: she complained about their generally



Figure 5-2. Purna Jeon at Base Camp of Mt. Everest on May 16, 2013. Photo by the author.

demanding, sometimes scolding attitudes toward her, while she wished to facilitate their feats by supporting them at lower camps and by not demanding their support with her own clumsy climbing skills. If she, moreover, having no previous high-altitude mountaineering experience, would reach the top at this first attempt, people might think the climb was too easy, she worried (Personal conversation, April 4, 2013). Thus, even an innermost, individualist feeling is tied to multifarious social relationships among expedition members.

In sum, a Korean expedition comprises multiple levels of sociality, and individuality, with all pros and cons, is stratified according to each level. Forming and engaging in a visceral inclination to a particular mountain is a naturalized technique that experienced mountaineers would develop by viewing mountains through the

mountaineer's gaze. However, this and other kinds of mountaineer's techniques are all subsumed into variegated social relationships that are historically formed. This does not mean that aspects of individuality are determined under the preformed social structure. Nor does conforming to the Confucian hierarchy mean to stick to relationships basically unequal. By keeping an organic solidarity in accordance to the age-long logic of interpersonal relationship, Korean mountaineers practice a freedom of speech and seek meanings of mountaineering.

5.3 Enlightenment Ideal: Claims of True and False Summits

In *The History of Korean Expeditions to Himalaya* (1998), Seon-Wu Nam chronicles the 286 expeditions participated by 1,554 Koreans from 1962 through 1997 to Himalayan and Central Asian mountains. He concludes that the Korean expeditions have been oriented toward the end that justified the means. He argues, "Due to practices of commercial mass media and of a few celebrated mountaineers, the essence of mountaineering has been distorted" (Nam 1998). What he means by the "essence of mountaineering" is the climber's faith pursuing *deungroju-ui*, literally a "principle of climbing for the route." This contrasts with *deungjeongju-ui*, a "principle of climbing for the top." In other words, deungroju-ui favors the notion that mountaineers value the route (in its difficulty), method or processes they climb, instead of the height they finally reach or the outcome they accomplish. This dichotomy of orientations between end and means was firstly introduced to the Korean mountaineering communities by the heroic figure, Young-Do Kim, the leader of the successful 1977 Mt. Everest expedition (I. Lee 2011).

Interestingly, Nam infers this penchant for the "principle of climbing for the top" from *compressed modernity*, a historical and sociological perspective theorized by the Korean sociologist Kyung-Sup Chang (1998; 1999).[112] Then, what Chang did not question is why the compressed modernity resulted in "political, economic, social, moral, and even safety related problems" in the country (Chang 1998:51). It is interesting to see how Korean Himalayan mountaineering as generally a non-eurocentric global project has moved forward vis-à-vis the larger circumstances of modernization and post-colonialism. I argue that the national competitive manner that measures athletic achievements in comparison to those of other nations is drawn from a distinctive cosmic order shaped throughout the twentieth century. The order conforms to the social evolutionism, as is supported by the underlying Confucian hierarchical worldview. I have also argued that, because of the colonial past, the widespread idea in the country is that what is better may be found not within the country, but from elsewhere. If this is so, this lopsided ordering of the world system is a reason why, for example, the alpine style is recently privileged within the Korean mountaineering communities as the best form of Himalayan mountaineering—largely by the influential Young-Do Kim's translations of Western mountaineers such as Walter Bonatti, Hermann Buhl, and Reinhold Messner. However, few Korean mountaineers I worked with considered the style of mountain climbing a crucial factor, and some of them did not find the alpine style necessarily better than other styles of mountaineering.

[112] "In South Korea," argues Chang, "political, economic, social, moral and even safety related problems … have seriously affected people's everyday lives, but the enormous pains have been either endured optimistically or anaesthetized effectively under perhaps the most drastic and compressed process of

I further suggest that Korean mountaineers generally anticipate enlightenment as a collective outcome of acts of mountain climbing and related experiences. Because of the multifarious sociality to which a mountaineer distinctively conforms, visions toward this ideal value are diverse. Notably, the exclusive club-oriented companionship has probably provided the conditions in which Korean Himalayan mountaineers to claim fake summits, as I discuss shortly. Yet, those who take the issues nationwide and beyond their own clubs have raised questions about this club-centered attitude. Either way, both aspire to the common goal: cultivating virtues as a form of enlightenment.

Korean mountaineering communities have recently struggled with the conflict between two claims: true and false summits. This diverging cosmic processes owe to respective historically grounded sociality. That said, Nam's critical review above can be located in the wave of critical reflection in vogue throughout the 1990s in Korean mountaineering society. Nam's (1998) admonition of a "moral hazard" may further be considered a miniature of modernity criticism from Confucian and Buddhist idealism. The monthly magazine, *Man and Mountain* (Saramgwa San), published its first issue in November of 1989 and commenced this wave with a contentious article, "The First Ascent of Churen Himal, Misunderstanding or Illusion?" The article delineates the controversy over the alleged first ascent of the 1970 Korean expedition on Churen Himal East (7,371m/24,183ft) in western Nepal. Following this, an editorial article of the same magazine of the next year listed "the fourteen teams the summits of which are suspicious" (B. Kim 1990) from the beginning of Korean Himalayan expeditions in 1962.

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national development in human history" (Chang 1999:51).

The reprimands against suspicious reporting and false social recognition have generally been quite severe because climbing achievement and appraisal to this are readily shared with those outside the climbers' circles—again unanimously called "uri"—constituting a moral issue. The worldwide controversy over the Eun-Sun Oh's claim of Kangchenjunga (8,586m/28,169ft) summit in 2009 is worthy of mention. Briefly, she declared that she reached the top of the mountain, but a few Korean mountaineers who climbed near her at the time she was on the mountain argued against her assertion. Without effectively proving her summit against the dispute, in 2010, she climbed the top of Annapurna I (8,091m/26,545ft) and proclaimed to be the first woman to climb all the fourteen eight-thousand-meter peaks. Two female mountaineers (Edurne Pasaban of Basque and Nives Meroi of Italy) had been competitively following after her. The controversy and debates continued for years both in Korean society and in international mountaineering communities, receiving considerable media attention. Finally, the 2011 issue of *Mountain Forum* (a mountaineering annual in South Korea) published a detailed analysis that has brought to light how the controversy has developed and whether it could be said that she reached the top or not (Editorial Department 2011b; 2011c). Criticizing her silence on this issue, the editorial board note,

> Some mountaineers said we should stop commenting it because nothing is good for the nation; however, we do not think so. How much of the truth has been misrepresented in the name of the national interest! No more shall we wish to remain as a shameful people avoiding the truth. We believe the real national interest follows keeping the fair way of proving the truth and enduring struggles of the moment, thus ennobling our nation. (Editorial Department 2011c:24)

Reviewing a number of notably disputed Himalayan mountaineering feats delivered by Koreans, they argue that the obligatory feelings of sponsor relationships caused a number of Korean mountaineers to inevitably fake the reality of their climbing. "The opinion generally shared by most of the mountaineers," the editors state, "was that expeditioners came to claim their false summits because they felt apologetic to their seniors or sponsor corporations and feared being charged by them" (Editorial Department 2011a:82). Note that the comment takes into account the sponsorship and the relationship with seniors as a single category of obligation with which mountaineers may feel burdened. I may safely say that most corporation sponsorships that significantly assisted Korean Himalayan mountaineering expeditions of all time were secured by interpersonal connections such as connections with fellow club members or senior mountaineers. Except the two guiding expeditions, all of my research expeditions were largely sponsored by companies, institutions, or individuals, all of which had been procured through manifold interpersonal relationships. As much as sponsors would expect the expeditions to be successful, the expeditioners would feel obligatory, the comment argues.

This is another example that shows the significance of mountaineering achievement going well beyond problem-solving somatic challenges, risk-taking psychological pleasures, and individualist rational motives. Many supporters, whether corporations or individuals, donate money not because they aim to receive back any kind of material interests, but because of the social relationships. Collective sharing and social recognition may far outweigh climbing performance to a mountaineer's mind—to the



Figure 5-3. Three members of the 2012 CALSAC SNU expedition on Camp Two, May 17, 2012. Seon-Pil Yoo (middle) is about to climb Lhotse (top of the photo). Photo by the author.

extents that one skews exploits and that it perturbs another. Moreover, without dismissing the particular sociality—national identity in the comment above—the recent trend of criticizing such patterns of misrepresentation exhibits characteristic reflexivity that has long been sought by those and other idealists, admiring fine morality that would lead not only the mountaineers but the society in general to an enlightened state. A mixture of Confucian and Buddhist cosmic dispositions plays as a basic scheme for sociality and idealism.

The case below illustrates this idealism of enlightenment realized by skewing the outcome. In the 2012 CALSAC SNU expedition, the committee decided that Yoo would climb Lhotse (8,516m/27,940ft) while I and Seo were to climb Mt. Everest. This was because the Lhotse climb was much cheaper than the Mt. Everest climb and shared most of the route as well (the routes diverge around 7,800m high, shortly below the final

camps). Also, he was the youngest and inexperienced, and particularly he suffered pulmonary edema at the reconnaissance expedition (climbing Lobuche East [6,119m/20,075ft] and visiting Everest Base Camp) launched three months earlier. At the summit attempt, he climbed up successfully right below the top, where he decided to turn around without reaching it. The next day he safely climbed down to Camp Two, where I, after the successful climb of Mt. Everest, was waiting for him. As we joined there, he described to me what happened around the top of Lhotse.

> It was very tiring to climb all along. I just followed Mingma [the accompanying Sherpa] who patiently helped me for everything. I arrived at the col right below the top. The distance to the top was around ten or fifteen meters. There was a bunch of fixed ropes that lead to the top, one of which I grabbed with my jumar (a climbing device) and began to jug on. Suddenly I fell backward though, because the rope I held was an old one and was cut as I weighted on it. Fortunately, I did not fall a long distance; it was just a few meters. I was so shocked, and climbed up to the col again. So awakened and panted. Then I thought, "I was climbing not on my own but relying totally on Mingma. What do I continue to climb for? This is not my climb. It's meaningless to climb just by relying on others, beyond my limit." So I turned around and went downward. (Personal conversation, May 20, 2012)

After listening to all this, I told him that he reached the top. It was a successful summit, I said, against his contention, for he was near enough to the top. Later in the official report of the expedition, he describes this further, noting,

> After listening to everything I explained to him, he said, "That should be the summit." I argued him that it should not be the summit because I didn't feel so, but he contended that no matter how I felt, it was the summit. If I were to know this I should have climbed the top. I began feeling regretful to my decision. (Everest Climbing Committee 2012)

In fact, the place he reached—the col—could never be considered the proper summit of Lhotse. I was aware of this at the moment of the conversation, and further I proved it by consulting a couple of Korean mountaineers who reached the top in the past. Nevertheless, I assented it to be a successful summit climb and persuaded him to think so. As a Korean mountaineer and especially the leader of the expedition, I had a number of reasons for doing so: His individualist understanding of the climb was obviously unacceptable to the club members, and his crucial decision near the top would have raised considerable regrets and exasperation against him and potentially my leadership as well. However, I believed that Yoo was too young and too inexperienced to comprehend such social obligations required to the team members. Indeed, he mentioned to me during the expedition that it was hard for him to comprehend why so many club members supported the expedition with considerable donations and why a dozen of them made visits to Base Camp to take care of the three mountaineers. I told him that he would someday realize why they did so and why he needed to say he reached the top. Further, I told him to write for the official report what happened on the summit climb without misrepresentation, and, in this way, none of us, I assuaged him, were to fake the truth. The editor of the report—also himself a mountaineer—Dae-Hun Yun (who published the "Hundred Scenes"), later told me that it was a hard decision for him not to revise the Yoo's report during his editing. On the other hand, Yun-Seop Seo, the general director of the expedition planning committee, chastised the revealing and said, "It's a fault that Seon-Pil's report was published without revision. But that you climbed to the top of Mt.

Everest was truly a great thing. It raised club members' pride" (Personal conversation, November 22, 2012).

Therefore, Korean mountaineers privilege seniority wisdom over abstract truth. The truth of the summit has never seriously mattered among all these individuals, including Yoo. The Lhotse summiteers with whom I consulted, too, sympathized the cause of the false claim and did not raise an official claim against it. Instead, all are concerned with the effects of the acts, albeit considering differing social circles. It was an unexpectedly considerable joy that we shared from the successful expedition. In the following years, Yoo has occasionally asked me why I exhorted him to think so at Camp Two. No matter what my response could be, I, as a member of the club, was pleased to see him participating more actively in the club matters and seemingly socializing better with the senior members. To my Korean eyes, he has been successfully learning "how to live" and cultivating virtues, throughout all misgivings, dynamics and passages of life including his Lhotse climb and recurrent recollections of it. This sort of continued life learning is, I suspect, a reliable candidate for a Korean version of divine feeling I once anticipated from standing on the apex of Mt. Everest.

5.4 The Hallucinating Mind and Soul Connection

In this section, I focus on describing the inclusive notion of self, which is characteristic of Korean cosmic disposition. As I discussed above, the Buddhist mind-and-matter duality characteristic of the Korean cosmic disposition sustains a form and practices of transferability or "deeper mind"—readily sharable mental images in

certain interpersonal situations without verbal or palpable communication. The deeper mind may be connected with other deeper minds through what I call "soul connection." Note that this inquiry is not "psychological," that is, about what people have in their minds. My observation describes how people act toward one another based on their assumptions of the other's knowing. The "assumptions" do not merely take place in the realm of thinking, but may represent the structure of thinking, as long as the manner by which they take place verifies an operation of distinctive structure of thinking. Two everyday Korean concepts of mind may help us here: *saeng-gak* and *gibun*. Saeng-gak is normally translated as thought, and gibun may be as feeling, mood, or the state of mind. For Koreans, saeng-gak does not represent the whole of immaterial aspect of a person, and gibun plays a significant role in the aspect to an extent that well affects interpersonal and social relationships (Breen 1999; Crane 1967; C. Kim 2014). Thus, their thoughts and conscious behaviors partly yet significantly rely on the unconscious and hidden connectivity with others. This connection of soul is more than an ideological rendering or a set of mental images within a prefigured Cartesian mind-and-body dualism. My concept of cosmic process captures this practical aspect of knowing and acting, as its core elements sit on the pragmatic significance of any occurrence that would result in the commencement of ontological, epistemological and ethical projects.

High-altitude mountaineers' hallucination is extraordinary and culturally specific. Those who experienced or witnessed it have variously opined, and yet most discussions remain at the psychological notion. The British John Noel wrote, "I used to take careful note of the climbers after their big climbs and watch the psychological effects of extreme

altitude. In all cases they complained that their mental impressions when high up were vague. They all suffered from mental depression and inertia" (Noel 1927:168-9).

Interestingly, a number of European and North American mountaineers recalled mystical experiences during climbing high mountains (cf. Isserman and Weaver 2008:397). The mystical anecdotes in mountaineering literature of the West include seeing ghosts or demons, accompanying unknown partners, watching oneself climbing from above and so on. As a mountaineer, I also experienced several moments when my thinking was unclear to me and looked weird during my exhausted state of climbing on peaks including Mt. Everest: conversation between "I" and "me" in my mind sounded loud as if someone spoke to me from somewhere else; during tiring, mechanical trudging on grotesque terrains, those simple matters of course often became, in an oneiric state, unclear to my mind. Did I do the thing that I had been thinking to do? Did I drink water a minute ago? Did he really say the thing to me? Was I climbing down or up? After a long exhausting span of work, the length of time that had passed was frequently mistaken as well. In short, the ordinary weight of time and acts, I may assuredly say, gets lost or distorted during hallucinations.[113] One that is ordinary refers to one that is customary, socially sanctioned and unconsciously supported individual perception. "If he sees what others cannot," Peirce calls it hallucination (CP 5.402, fn.2). His definition of hallucination calls for a social and cultural approach to the seemingly psychological state.

[113] In 2006, I was hallucinating when I was climbing near the top of Mt. Everest. An unknown problem occurred to my oxygen apparatus, and the oxygen gas suddenly stopped flowing into my mask. I was barely able to tumble down to the highest camp, where one of my colleagues helped me to breathe through her mask. About the critical hours, only murky memories remain to this day: I conversed with a dead body lying on the route; consciousness was being gone away, while the body was walking toward the camp.

A mundane way of thinking indeed requires a kind of interpretative effort to give cultural significance to preobjective, presubjective, and thereby pre-ethico-onto-epistemological occurring.

Though hallucination rarely takes place in contemporary conventionalized Himalayan mountaineering, I happened to be with and deal with hallucinating Korean mountaineers during my field research. Below are illustrations of two notable cases. One of the striking features in the relationship between the mountaineers and others is that "minds" are practiced as being connected to one another in a characteristic way. A mountaineer recovered from hallucination began thinking in that way, as he recovered and came to form a mental image through that particular way.

Case: Hallucinating Mountaineer's Appeal on Tserko Peak

"Between giving up and keeping going, where would the exact border lie at all?" The exhausted Gi-Beom Lee told me. "I was used to pray whenever I climbed and ask God to let me realize it."

He, and I as well, were two of the six instructors at the Kolon-Sport Mountaineering School Himalayan Program of 2013. In the ninth day of the program, we set out to the top of Tserko Peak (5,742m/18,839ft) as a final goal of that journey, starting in that morning from the high camp. Having climbed high mountains recently, I was well acclimatized to the thin air, summiting a day earlier than the others to set up the route and camp with a few Sherpas. When I was near the top, taking care of the struggling and panting students and other instructors, one of the instructors radioed me.

"Gi-Beom seems odd. We asked him to go down, but he insisted on going forward. He just rambles."

I passed this to senior instructors near me, and they agreed that I should go and take care of him—persuade him to allow me to bring him down. I quickly rappelled down the slope.

As I arrived at Gi-Beom, he seemed lucid but a bit confused by the other's concern: "I just dozed off a little bit; yesterday I couldn't sleep well. That's it."

Indeed, his face was quite swollen—a sign of edema, an early symptom of acute altitude sickness. I asked him to go down, but he refused. Even so, he was talking normally and looked a bit tired. We began to slowly ascend the mountain in spite of my misgivings.

He continued to chat. "I should have climbed high mountains when I was in my twenties. Alpine climbing has long been my dream, and, at last, I came up here." He repeated the "dream" story, as we climbed, albeit slowly. We stopped frequently for him to catch his breath, and the reposes he took grew more frequent and longer. He seemed like a man on the verge of finalizing his decades-long passion, for which I wished to assist.

"Do I look odd?" He asked me.

"You should feel free to turn back, even if the top is only a meter away," I responded. After all, it was he, I thought, who could and should define his state of consciousness, rather than leave it up to me.

But we had gone too far to turn back. Climbing up the summit ridge, we saw the last climbers elated by celebrating on the top, merely a few hundred feet away. Gi-Beom, however, seemed to be rapidly getting more tired, while continuing the gibberish.

"Illusions are approaching to me, now and then. And then suddenly I wake up. Then I realize, I have been thinking bizarre things."

Now I felt alarmed and brusquely urged him to turn back. But I couldn't get stern, as in fact we were about to achieve his decade-long dream. Finally we arrived at the summit, though which was not joyful to me in my state of concern for Gi-Beom. Senior instructors urgently pressured him to descend. "Stop babbling. Come down, now!" They exclaimed impatiently.

The problem waiting for us was a steep rocky section about one hundred feet high, which had to be rappelled down. I was afraid he would fail to manage his gear with the rope correctly, although he oddly assured everyone, "See, how well I rap here!" With little trouble, fortunately, he passed the section to a lower slope.

I grew more irritated as he repeatedly refused assistance. "Bro! You don't know what it's like to be worn out on high mountains, do you? Why do you refuse to get help? It's so stupid!" I removed his crampons, so I could more easily assist him.

Then, wishing to show how skillfully he could slide down the rest of the slope, to everyone's surprise he removed the carabiner from the rope, jumped out onto the steep, snowy slope and began sliding, quickly downward. I feared that he would quickly lose control and slide to his death, with no traction on his boots.



Figure 5-4. Gi-Beom's hallucination. Sherpas are trying to move the disoriented Korean during climbing down from the top of Tserko Peak in northern Nepal, November 11, 2013. Photo by the author.

I leaped onto the slope below him to block him and keep him from sliding more. He crashed into me, and I caught him, digging my crampons into the crunchy snow, and dragged him to the rope. "What are you doing now!?" I blustered furiously. Gi-Beom protested, but I was no longer interested in his assessment of the situation. He sat on the slope, and we—four Sherpas were with us—decided to drag him with a rope. He continuously appealed to us to let him walk, yet I pretended not to hear him and started dragging him on the rough glacier. It must have been painful for him, and he complained to no avail.

The lead instructor had already descended with other members of the party. He watched us from below and finally came back to us. He slapped on Gi-Beom's face, scolding, "Do you want to die? Stop talking and follow him!"

For a while we continued to drag him, until he began trudging along on his own. About an hour later, a Sherpa ascended to us, bringing an emergency-oxygen set from Base Camp. As Gi-Beom began breathing, he stopped talking. Sherpas joked and laughed. "No more talk, no more sick. If you get sick, you talk a lot."

When everyone was safely back at Base Camp, Gi-Beom was lying down in the tent, breathing through the oxygen mask and looking puffy and ill. I visited him and asked, "Do you remember anything that happened over there?" He said he did remember some of it, including some of our arguments. More than anything else, he was apologetic for his causing trouble and disrupting the climb planned next.

This case illustrates that for Koreans, whether a person hallucinated and was out of one's mind is to be determined by a collective decision, rather than an individual's evaluation of the patient's condition. Without the lead instructor's violence and scolding, I, as well as Gi-Beom, alone had been unable to decide it. Gi-Beom's habitual prayer to God (not meant to the Christian God [*hananim*] but the widespread concept of the Korean god [*sin*]), due to the apparent inability to draw "the exact borderline between giving up and keeping going," shows this collectivity. It has to be drawn collectively, normally with other mountaineers yet better with the highest authority ethico-ontologically connectible to an individual mind (§4.3).

Moreover, this collectivity does not simply refer to being and thinking with others instead of being and thinking alone. This alone-versus-group dichotomy does not explain Koreans' practice of mind such as this case. The collectivity involves a communication of a specific cultural character. Gi-Beom's judgment probably seen rational from his own eyes before he breathed through the oxygen was assessed "irrational" and caused irritation from others. Even Gi-Beom himself recollected his conscious behaviors during the climbing as reprehensible. The angered reactions of other Koreans to the disoriented mountaineer—the lead instructor's violence as well as my blunt treatment—exhibit that they conducted themselves toward a sort of "inner mind" or "soul" instead of the conscious but seemingly disoriented saeng-gak of Gi-Beom. The collective gibun (anger and irritation) operated more crucially than saeng-gak in a way that the former helped determine the latter. Thought production comprised of thoughts and epistemology is tied to social relations. This thought production process is better exemplified by a case of retrieval from hallucination.

Case: Retrieving Hallucinated Consciousness on Mt. Everest

"Who can predict a death at all?" I wondered. I began climbing up from Camp Four (7,920m/26,000ft) to help Seong-Ho Seo, member of the 2013 Korean Everest-Lhotse Expedition. With twelve eight-thousand-meter peaks under his belt, the thirty-three-year-old Korean was an accomplished mountaineer, and this was his without-oxygen attempt at Mt. Everest (8,848m/29,029ft) on May 20, 2013. He had

already reached the highest point on earth with supplemental oxygen in 2006 and wanted to try to do so without it.

About three hours before, when I was on Camp Four of Lhotse (8,516m/27,940ft) preparing for the summit bid that night, I received an urgent call from Ngaa Tenji through the radio: "Mr. Seo is now very tired. All energy finished. We need a rescue." At the time I did not realize his plea was really intended for me, not the other Sherpas on Camp Four of Mt. Everest; the walkie-talkie channel he called on was used only among the Korean members. I turned the channel to call the manager superintending the overall Sherpa movement at Base Camp and transferred the urgent request. The Sherpa manager told me not to worry, for in Camp Four there were "extra Sherpas" who would help those who were in danger. Another team's Sherpa who was with me also assured me, "Mr. Seo is strong; there won't be any problem." A certain premonition still lingered in my head, though, and thus, after a brief thought, I gave up the Lhotse climb and began climbing to reach Seong-Ho. The two Camp Fours are close to each other, taking about an hour to reach Mt. Everest Camp Four. There, however, no Sherpa was preparing to go nor was anyone acknowledging the seriousness of what was happening high up on the mountain. I procured two oxygen sets: one for myself and the other for Seong-Ho. In that camp, breathing without an oxygen tank is challenging and dangerous even for those who are well acclimatized. With few exceptions, everyone, Sherpa or foreigner, wore an oxygen mask there.

As I climbed alone, the dusk came slowly down like every other day; a number of descending, exhausted summiteers came by. It was indeed one of the harshest lands,

hostile to any living being. The gasp and slugging you continue can at any time bring about fatality. After a few hours of trudging, I finally came upon Ngaa Tenji climbing down. A hundred feet above him, Seong-Ho was also climbing down. A huge wave of relief swept over me. The exhausted Ngaa Tenji rapidly climbed down to the camp as I joined the Korean.

Seong-Ho was unable to recognize me. He murmured something in Nepali, perhaps his habitual, joking salutation throughout the expedition. I pleaded, pressing him to identify me. Failing to do so, I just asked him to use the oxygen I brought for him.

"No, why should I? I won't be using it," he replied in Korean, though.

I knew him to be stubborn and no amount of pleading could get him to use the oxygen.

"Well, okay," I said, "Then let's go down now."

"Why? No! I should keep climbing up."

I was terrified now. He was clearly disoriented. Exactly a year ago, in almost the same location, a Korean mountaineer I passed by when I climbed down from the top died on the way down. Like Seong-Ho, he reportedly refused the accompanying Sherpa's plea to climb down and insisted on climbing up. Was I about to witness a repeat of that tragic event?

I stopped asking, paused a bit, and called his name in a low voice: "Seong-Ho."

The hallucinating man seemed to take the seriousness embedded in my appeal. The seriousness was of a peculiar kind, an assertive, masculine, and genuinely brotherly

intimacy that was valid, or I believed so, primarily among the Korean men in their mid-thirties, a generation who had grown up in a similar cultural and national context.

"Er, you're Young-Hoon, aren't you? Why are you here?" He slurred, awakening. I was greatly relieved.

"Yeah, I came here because of you. Let's go down, man."

We began trudging down now darkened slope, heading toward the twinkling lights in the last camp. I worried about his slow pace and labored breathing. He was too exhausted, and needed frequent rests and kept plodding along lethargically. "I can't keep breathing. Have no energy," he murmured through his frozen lips. I repeated my offer of the oxygen, which he absentmindedly refused. Three hours of deadly tired tramping finally brought us to the tents, whereas Seong-Ho, in an area called the "Death Zone" (above 8,000m or 26,000ft), was refusing to use the gas for more than thirty hours.

This case illustrates that an instance of communication involves more than sharing any discernible information. It requires a specific cultural attitude as shared by the communication participants. Moreover, an effort of communication pushes its participants into a specific mode in which they may share information. This cultural attitude is culturally specific, as Koreans believe that they can retrieve hallucinating minds back to normal by applying the specific way, as I did with the hallucinating Seong-Ho.

The moment of awakening the hallucinating mountaineer exhibits a cultural formation of human psyche and psychology, a cosmic disposition of practiced empathy

and sympathy. While experiencing the feelings of others (empathy) and practicing the shared feelings with a sensibility (sympathy) may be considered a pan-cultural structure of interpersonal situations (Bornstein 2012), they are actualized through cosmic processes that exhibit distinctive cosmic disposition. It was another Korean—myself—who was close to Seong-Ho in many ways and thus able to awaken the disoriented mind. As Peirce noted, "The recognition by one person of another's personality takes place by means to some extent identical with the means by which he is conscious of his own personality" (CP 6.160). The seriousness that played in the consciousness retrieval was so powerful, drawing his whole state of mind onto a table of communication even without knowing it, yet peculiar of its kind. This must not be mistaken as two individuals who share many aspects of life would more likely to think the same thing, as if telepathy. To the contrary, those similar people may perhaps more easily bring up thoughts that contrast with one another. My point is merely that the hallucinating man would more mirror the other who is getting at him than reveal himself. Eduardo Viveiros de Castro noted that "the other of the Other was not exactly the same as the other of the Same" (Castro 2014:51). What could be called "identical" is, as Peirce puts it, "the means by which he is conscious of his own personality" (CP 6.160).

As a cosmic process this extraordinary event of consciousness retrieval has an impact on the future, engendering its *own* future in a reciprocal relationship with cosmic disposition. Seong-Ho unfortunately died while sleeping early the next morning due to the suffocation aggravated by the extreme fatigue. My deed of helping him coming back to the camp, in turn, was acclaimed a number of times by the leader Chang-Ho Kim as an

exemplary action showing mountaineers' brotherhood and sacrifice. For this heroization, the team's planning of separating the two climbs (Mt. Everest and Lhotse) in two consecutive days was ignored by the leader himself. That said, my backing-up of the Everest party, as I did, was indeed preplanned. Seong-Ho's funeral was observed back in South Korea about a week later. There has been no skepticism or expressed suspicion about the crucial decision of the expedition members allowing Seong-Ho not to use the oxygen mask until his death. His continued obstinacy not to use it even during the critical hours was yet considered a "rational" choice by others, especially by myself for the first time. He was therefore considered to "have chosen" to die, or, as Kim described, "walked into the path to death" (Personal conversation, May 22, 2013). Without prohibiting by social relations an individual's freedom on life matters, the soul connection provides a source of meaning for mountaineering.

After all, so perplexing to me throughout the aftermath of his death was the impossibility of accepting fully the plain fact of his nonliving in this world. A few months later, I wrote a piece of short story, entitled "Clamor with No Echo," about him and other dead mountaineers I knew personally, focusing on the strange connection that goes on beyond the life-and-death divide. Disoriented by the continued connection with dead mountaineers, I ask: "As much as I had never recognized you fully when you were alive, have I just been a dream, a mere possibility, to you and in the end to myself?" (Oh 2013b:454). Mountaineering is an expression of such a solipsistic question: "I shout out, shout stood on top of the mountain that I am here and not dead … But there has been no response" (Oh 2013b:454). The story was awarded the Korean Mountain Literature Prize



Figure 5-5. Seong-Ho's death. Sherpas are preparing to bring down Seong-Ho's dead body at Camp Four of Mt. Everest, which rises behind, May 22, 2013. Photo by the author.

in 2013. The commentary highly appreciated the story's "authenticity and honesty" (H. Yun 2013:136). The deeper mind and connectivity of soul are never purely an individual concern, but a collective question, which may be eased if not resolvable through social recognition. The collective decision at the state of individual consciousness, and the connectivity of soul as well, were applied and reemphasized during mountaineering and its recollections. In sum, patterns of behavior once exhibited exert their own momentum through the real significances each cosmic process brought about at every new occurrence of time and action.

5.5 Korean Mountaineers' Perceptions of Sherpa: Relationship in a Hierarchical World

Sherpas' support and participation are vital in contemporary Himalayan mountaineering in many regards (§6.4), but, for Korean mountaineers, this is often neglected. Their discourse of the sport rarely takes into account the Sherpas in an expedition equally with other Koreans. This section focuses on this disregard. For Koreans, the Sherpa are, as a group of Nepali citizens, basically regarded as people deficient in necessaries and in need of assistance. Another basic perception of the Sherpa is to romantically idealize them. On top of these basic views, they are often characterized as materialistic, being obtrusively oriented toward material gain. Moreover, Koreans take Sherpas as partial members of the team, as if a barrier between inside and outside of the Korean-exclusive solidarity. Further, they sometimes put the Sherpas in the ladder of the Confucian hierarchy, so much so that the Koreans find cultural affinity from the Nepali's

customs and behavioral manners. In all this, my focus lies on the way in which Koreans come to view their other in Himalayan mountaineering, rather than providing a critique to the stereotypes.

First of all, a romantic idealism persists as backdrop against which Koreans engage in the diversity they face in their view of the Sherpa. I had a chance to talk with a producer of a public TV broadcasting station in South Korea, and he questioned me about my research topic. My rhetorical answer was "Sherpa experience of Himalayan mountaineering," which simply eluded his interests as for a potential topic of his filming. Instead, he asked to devise topics of a new scheme of feeling, interestingly for both researchers and mountaineers. "We need something more 'sexy,'" he insisted,

> We need impression and a plot. We should make people say, after they watched [the show], "See what these guys are doing; they are really fascinating than what others do." Young people these days are feeble-minded. It should be awesome if a student of Seoul National University does something like that. I'd like to take something like a Sherpa love story. Do you know any case like this? (July 6, 2012)

His comment illustrates that in the Korean society both Himalayan mountaineering and anthropological field research could commensurably be regarded as an alternative option to the harmful aspects of modern lives. The peril of modernization in the country is considered to drive the next generations to become weak, feeble-minded, and not adventuring. Similarly, Sherpas who live in a poor and thus supposedly under-modern country fit with the anti-modern romantic ideal, which is in this case the romance itself.

This standard romanticism does not always incite people to take sympathetic approaches to the Nepali and the Sherpa. Nepal has been introduced to Korean society frequently as "one of the world's poorest countries" as the World Bank report states (1991).[114] For Koreans, the people of Nepal are generally imagined poor as such, and rich Nepalis are hard to think of. With this stereotyped image, those considerate Koreans might want to concern and take heed to their impoverished condition. A manager of a Korea-Nepal fair tourism NGO said that Korean clients participating in the programs of community-based tourism she directed could be divided into two types. One is of those who, by participating in the particular form of tourism, simply find merits from sharing cultures and appreciate them and yet no more. The other is of those who envision from the sharing of culture a greater possibility that might lead into paramount social changes (Personal conversation, November 22, 2013). In other words, experiencing a new culture—romantically—persists as a basic element of Nepal tourism as practiced by Koreans, while some are concerned about the economically imperiled context of the people, sympathetically.

[114] No more such nomination is in use for an official designation. The United Nations refers Nepal as one of forty-nine Least Developed Countries (LDCs) (United Nations 2013). The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (UNCDP) uses three criteria including per capita income, human assets, and economic vulnerability. Some of the analyses about the economic conditions of Nepal reported by the organization may help our understanding of the country: Among all forty-nine LDCs, Nepal is categorized as one of eight countries in Asia; one of sixteen Service exporters; one of the top five countries that workers' remittances represent a large share of gross national income of the country; one of the five countries where employment rate is high and at the same time a high share of the population live below the $2-per-day poverty line; and one of the exemplary countries where on-farm production and jobs remain mainstay, although non-farm employment is increasingly important, among others. Comparatively large increase of labor force is notable in the country, as new entrants to the labor force numbered 465,000 in 2005, a figure that is expected to peak at 633,000 by 2020.

When it comes to Sherpa, there seems not much to demand our attention within the general Korean perspective. It is basically because non-mountaineering forms of Nepal tourism do not usually involve attentive interactions with the Tibetan minority. I do not have statistical data about the ethnic composition of tourism guides in Nepal; my impression is that non-Sherpa ethnics occupy the vast majority of job positions in the country's tourism sectors, except mountaineering. Therefore, if a trekking does not head to particular places like Solukhumbu ("the homeland of Sherpa"), few chances are likely to occur for individual or group tourists to embrace Sherpa people and their culture. Moreover, while recently more than twenty thousand Koreans annually visit Nepal, only a hundred or two engage in Himalayan mountaineering, where they most likely travel along with Sherpa team guides or climbing guides. Further, the mountaineers' representations including expedition reports, magazine articles, and TV shows have rarely taken account of Sherpas in detail. In short, few exceptional images of Sherpa are widely shared by the Korean public.

The small and relatively closed community of Korean Himalayan mountaineers do, however, have some images of Sherpa. A well-known fact in the circle is that Sherpas are paid well comparably to the non-Sherpa Nepalis. Not only imagined as rich, Sherpas are, for some Koreans with extensive experience with the people, considered to be greedy and astute, more than shrewd and materialistic. In 2007, Hak-Jae Yu was staying four days at Camp Four (the highest camp) of Mt. Everest. He was climbing as a member of the Korean Silver Everest Expedition which consisted of eight over-sixty-year-old ("silver") Koreans. His task was to support the aged members climbing and thus he had

been waiting for the summit party to come back to the camp. Ngaa Tenji Sherpa had accompanied the Korean leader Seong-Bong Kim, successfully guiding the sixty-six-year-old Korean. In fact, the Sherpa spent enormous effort to help the totally exhausted climber wade down for almost a full day, sometimes "carrying him on my back, the seventy-five-kilogram [165 lb.] man!" (Personal conversation, May 22, 2013). However, the Sherpa manner toward foreign mountaineers in his utmost caring seemed misinterpreted. Receiving the two at the camp, Yu noticed, he said, the exhausted Ngaa Tenji remained away and watched over Kim rather indifferently. "Sherpas do not," Yu asserted, "want to give their arms to a [exhausted] climber, because they fear to bring about any problem later due to the close caring; they'd help by saying this or that, but keeping distance and without bodily contact" (Personal conversation, June 28, 2012).

Other experienced Korean mountaineers showed a similar revulsion toward Sherpa attitudes they viewed as calculating and self-centered. For example, discussing equipment needed for climbing the final part of Mt. Everest, Seong-Wuk Hong leading the 2013 Korean Mt. Everest Peace Expedition advocated the idea of preparing an ample length of rope and imagined the Sherpa reaction to a case where the prepared rope is insufficient. He said, "During the summit climb, Sherpas would turn around without pushing further if the rope would have run out, while we must push further without fixing the rope on the route. So we need to make sure that we have prepared the full 1,600 meters of rope from the beginning" (Personal conversation, September 17, 2012). Sherpas, in his imagination, were regarded as concerned only with the contract and not the goal of climbing and thus suspected as cunning, calculative and unfaithful. Similarly,

a former official at the Embassy of South Korea in Nepal, Yong-Kwan Cheong has long been himself a Himalayan mountaineer. After dealing with numerous occasions with various Korean expeditioners and Sherpas, he concluded, "Sherpas are now cunning enough. They are talking too much—they'd talk anything. Makalu Sherpas are perhaps not that mean though, because they are still innocent" (Personal conversation, March 30, 2013); here "Makalu Sherpa" refers to those from Walung and its vicinity. Cheong's comment slightly differs from Hong's view: Sherpas were initially innocent, but changed to be cunning; that is, they are becoming modernized, climbing upward the ladder of hierarchy, and inducing threats to the status of the Koreans.

Thus, there are questions as to why the dichotomy of being "cunning" and being "innocent" matters for Koreans, and how. Below is a case at the spring season of 2013 on Mt. Everest, which illustrates a Korean perspective on Sherpa.

Case: Sherpa Allocation and the Discrepancy of Sherpa-Client Relationship

Afraid of his chronic agoraphobia to recur, Tae-Geun Yun, after climbing up to Camp One, declared to bail out of Mt. Everest expedition on May 15 in 2013. Yun was one of the three Korean climbers in the Korean Dream Everest Expedition, right next to the Korean Everest-Lhotse Expedition in which I was a climbing member. He was a rich businessman and hired two "personal Sherpas," while the other two members—Pil-Seok Han and Sang-Myeong Seok—hired one each. Also, though it was in the middle of the expedition period, he tipped every hired Nepali of both his team and my team considerable amounts of money, such as $1,000 to each of his team's four Sherpas.

At the next day, Han and Seok came to my team's community tent to consult about Sherpa management for the rest period of the expedition. A few matters regarding Sherpa work duty were unclear to them, and they were less experienced to such matters than most members of my team. The issue was that, since Yun abandoned further climbing, they wished to make use of the manpower of his two Sherpas for their summit bid that was planned to set out the next day. After a discussion, however, it turned out that the tips given were not entitled to what was called "summit bonus" (or sometimes "summit-try bonus" or "Camp-Four-start bonus") but meant as just tips. Summit bonus is one of the categories of wage for climbing Sherpa and is to be paid as he accompanies client climbers' summit bid. In that expedition, it was $1,000. The payment could be made by either the local agency or the expedition, depending on the nature of the contract. In most of the recent expeditions on eight-thousand meter peaks, including the two Korean ones, the summit bonuses were to be paid by the Nepali agency, in these cases Seven Summit Treks (SST). In fact, the contract made through a Seoul-based agency (Eurasia Trek) between each of the two expeditions and SST was of the packaged nature, that is, all expenses were detailed in an invoice and paid by each client at once before launching the expeditions. An exception to this predetermined invoice is the regularized "tips" (§6.4)—from around $500 to $2,000, usually $1,000—that should be paid to a climbing Sherpa after completion of the summit attempt.

Han and Seok wished to make clear and carefully discussed the flow of the money with other Koreans. The main concern was how each of the four Sherpas and the Base Camp manager of SST as well would take this issue. Seok guessed that retaining all the

four Sherpa assistance should not cause a problem because the allocation of each Sherpa to each member was a matter determined solely by the members, and SST should not concern about this. Seok-Wu Kim, the accompanying cameraman of his team, gave a negative opinion to this. Although it could be the case, he said, the manager of SST would still be unhappy to let the two Sherpas of Yun, plus the other two, climb together with only two members, because they would have to pay the summit bonuses to all the four which now seemed unnecessary.

At the next day, the two Koreans and all four Sherpas climbed up to Camp Two. Han, being the leader of the team, decided there not to make use of the additional assistance though, and apologized the two previously Yun's Sherpas for getting them to climb to the camp with an intention to accompany to the top. A couple of hours later, however, the two Sherpas told them that they still wished to accompany them free of charge.

The complication of this issue illustrates the underlying discrepancy between the understandings of the nature of Sherpa-client relationship. First of all, Korean mountaineers regard the climbing Sherpas exclusively as "individual guides" for each client climbers, in the sense that a hired guide accompanies most, if not all, of his paired client's climbing and takes care of his or her safety and conditioning throughout the expedition. Second, the pairing of Sherpa and client is, from the Koreans' view, one of the matters an expedition is supposed to determine, expedition constituted firstly by the "members" and secondly by those hired personnel. Therefore, Korean mountaineers are

used to saying, for example, “You bring one Sherpa,” “You buy one Sherpa,” “You send X Sherpa to him,” and so on. The membership Sherpas hold in a Korean expedition is considered not genuine but partial.

One might say that Koreans have looked down on Sherpa. To be sure, depreciating attitudes toward Sherpa and hired Nepalis in general seem to have long been an acceptable attitude for Korean Himalayan mountaineers. I remember vividly at my first Himalayan expedition in 2002 when an experienced Korean mountaineer conversed with a Sherpa cook in an expressly despising tone. During my field research, too, a considerable effort was required to calm myself down when, for example, I witnessed one of the most renowned Korean Himalayan mountaineers treating a couple of village Sherpa porters virtually like his servants; his belittling manner went on to a highly esteemed Sherpa congressperson, to whom I introduced the Korean mountaineer. In fact, a few of the most active Korean Himalayan mountaineers during the period of my research were notorious among the Sherpas for quick temper, depreciating manner or both, a kind of complaint that I have never heard from the Nepalis in their transnational encounters except those with the Koreans (of course, there have been other types of complaints about other foreigners).

However, this is not the whole picture. I can also name many Korean Himalayanists who are unequivocally polite, deferential to the locals, and beloved by them as well. For example, when referring to a particular Nepali, whether a climbing Sherpa or a local porter, such Koreans use honorific language—a true sign of deference, as it is more common for Koreans to refer to an unfamiliar non-Korean with plain or low

terms. Moreover, hired Sherpa climbers were used to be referred by Korean members according to their respective age hierarchy—a Korean member would call an older Sherpa (or other hired Nepalis) "*hyeong*," a widespread Korean appellation meaning an older brother. Indeed, this practice is similar to the Nepali usage of "*dai*" or, in Sherpa, "*chijyu*."

These opposing attitudes between deference and belittling go beyond the realm of interpersonal situations. During the Kolon Sport Alpine School Himalayan Program of 2013, Jae-Su Kim, one of the six Koreans who have topped all the fourteen eight-thousanders, instructed the mountaineering students about better manners towards the locals. He said,

> Whenever I went out on an expedition, I was trying to hire porters, instead of yaks, although it is more expensive. That's only $1,000-2,000 difference, though. The reality is that, if you have a dozen yaks, this means that you are rich. It's the same with the lodges. When a season ended, the lodge owners would bring money back to Kathmandu by packing it in a huge sack and riding a helicopter. But the kitchen helpers would perhaps be paid only 1,000-2,000 rupees. (November 7, 2013)

Note that these "better manners" are discussed largely in terms of money. His view, though it aroused sympathy from other Koreans, is considered ambiguous, if not specious, by Western commentators. Kim was climbing K2 (8,611m/28,251ft) in Pakistan in the summer of 2008 when eleven climbers perished on the mountain within two days. This tragedy was recorded as one of the most devastating disasters in the history of Himalayan mountaineering. Among the dead were two climbing Sherpas[115]

[115] The dead climbing Sherpas were in fact not ethnic Sherpa but Bhote. They were Pasang Bhote and

hired for the Korean expedition he was leading, as well as three Koreans from his group. In the midst of the disaster, Kim asked two of the Sherpas on his team to climb up and find the missing climbers. Unfortunately, one of the two Sherpas was unable to return, perishing. Two books were published in English to document the disaster, and both describe how indifferent, unfriendly and incommunicable (mainly because of the language barrier) Kim was to the Nepalis and other climbers (Wilkinson 2010; Zuckerman and Padoan 2012). Also, both describe in detail an occasion on which Kim handed $5,000 as a compensation to the Sherpa widow as if he wished to wrap it up as soon as possible.

Despite the authors' apparently hostile treatments of him, their acrid imaginings about the Korean might possibly tell some truth. Pemba Tchring of Walung complained about a lack of continued friendship in a similarly unfavorable tone. He said,

> We reached the top (Annapurna I [8,091m/26,545ft]), and of course this was great. After the summit, however, [the Koreans] just left. This isn't good. One lady climbed with me four mountains: Nanga Parbat, Annapurna I, Kanchenjunga, and Dhaulagiri [all are among the fourteen peaks over eight thousand meters]. After all however, there was no word any more. This is a problem. (Personal conversation, July 31, 2012)[116]

Finally, Sherry Ortner reported a similarly interesting interview that includes harsh remarks from Ang Karma Sherpa. In the 1990 conversation, Ang Karma criticized two nationalities, accusing them of "want[ing] to be masters" and "kick[ing] those

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Jumik Bhote.

[116] I suspect that the unnamed lady was unnamed to me because he knew that I personally knew her. Later I realized that she was one of my fellow, famed Korean mountaineers.

below," displaying "bad tempers" that "Sherpas don't like." He said, Sherpas "work with Europeans and Americans where they are treated as friends" (Ortner 1999:214). Although Ortner does not disclose which two nationalities the Sherpa mentioned, I strongly suspect Ang Karma was referring to Koreans, since I find his name in the reports of a number of Korean expeditions in the late 1980s, and later he began to manage an agency that arranged expeditions for many Koreans.[117] Ortner concludes: "Acts of resistance … question the assumptions of superiority at the basis of hierarchical relationships" (Ortner 1999:216).

I wish to neither censure nor advocate for the Koreans here. My concern is, again, to ask why and how they came to envision the locals in such contradictory ways. The dichotomy of equality and hierarchy, in Ortner's appeal for egalitarian anthropology, does little to render the Koreans' attitudes sensible. A dichotomy more meaningful and striking to the Koreans is, for instance, the contradiction between honorific and low language uses; that is, hierarchy persists while equality has no place in either end of the Koreans' dichotomous attitudes. American egalitarianism, I examined in Chapter 2, is incommensurable to the classical Korean perspective. The ambiguous benevolence exhibited by Yun and Kim has little to do with the Ortnerian pan-friendship. Rather, it resists universalism by attempting to enclose the "innocent" climbing partners under their Confucian pseudo-kin grouping in which hierarchy and asymmetric sympathy play the

[117] She states the reason why she leaves out the specific nationality, saying "the Sheraps do not like to see this sort of backstate talk published; it may have the tone of an ethnic slur; not all Sherpas would agree on these characterizations anyway, etc." (Ortner 1999:213). Preparing my 2009 presentation in Seoul, "Prospects and Problems on Korean High-Altitude Mountaineering," I asked her through an email whether Ang Karma talked about Korean. She replied she did not remember.

key role. Even in the relationship where this hierarchical companionship once formed, a kind of friendship by which one readily perceives deeper connection with the other rarely takes place between Koreans and the Sherpa. This is not because the Koreans essentially discount the Nepali partners for any reason but because they would see little possibility of forming a culturally specific community with them, such as was displayed in the art of sharing inner mind of Wu and other members of the 2012 expedition. It might seem ironic that the renowned Korean mountaineer, who irritated me by slighting the Sherpa porters, decided a decade ago to dedicate the rest of his life to improving education in Nepal by raising the largest-ever sum of donations in South Korea. He continues to do so. For him, this activism, but not sharing feeling or equal treatment, is a true expression of "love," as has he said to media for a number of times.

Moreover, not only do Sherpas come to sit somewhere in the Confucian hierarchical world, but they mirror the Koreans. For Koreans, monetary concerns seem crucial, and they are likely to confer calculative significance straight away for each behavior. For instance, Seok-Wu Kim, the three members of the Korean Dream Everest Expedition, and the renowned-yet-belittling mountaineer considered material outcomes, in the end, to be pivotal for individual behaviors. On the way to Mt. Everest in 2013, the Korean members came across an American who was traveling unkemptly for nearly a year throughout South Asia. Long haired, he looked untidy. Referring to his shabby backpack, a Korean cameraman supposed, "Half of his backpack must be money." On the other hand, an accompanying seventeen-year-old Pemba Sherpa also gave a comment about the traveler: "It is not a good idea to have such long hair because it gets hot if he

sweats" (April 13, 2013). If Koreans noticed the Sherpa being cunning, it would firstly be Koreans, not the Sherpa, who are in general familiar to be cunning and materialistic, hiding such schemes inside a backpack or "inner mind" and often plying guesswork without overt communications.

In the case above, thoughts and behaviors of the Sherpas and managers were deliberately imagined by the Korean mountaineers through a series of collaborative thought processes. The Koreans expected that the four Sherpas should follow the two members toward the end of the expedition since, they assumed, the contract was made between the expedition and the agency and defined four Sherpas belonging to the expedition. This differed from the viewpoint of SST. For the managers of the agency, the contents of the contract were regarded as relatively insignificant and unable to reflect the reality that should be changing and indeterminable. This differing view of the contract could cause conflicts between a Nepali agency and a Korean agency or mountaineers, aggravated by the guesswork Koreans normally apply thus to define the Nepalis "cunning." Mingma, the managing director of SST, once asked me to facilitate between him and a Korean mountaineer who intended to climb Mt. Everest in the spring season of 2013. He said,

> Previously I told him the price for Everest was $39,000. Things have changed now though. We'll provide him with an individual tent in high camps, and he can use it alone, separately from his Sherpa. Also, we'll arrange one Camp-Two cook only for him. The Icefall fee was raised from $200 to $500. Please ask him for us, very respectfully. (Personal conversation, March 30, 2013)

So I called the Korean, who complained,

> [Mingma] invoiced me $39,000 before, without giving the detailed prices—I mean, each price for each item. I asked him many times [to give the details] but he didn't. Besides, I had to ask my younger brother for doing all these communications for me. He could speak and write good English, but he was a lawyer and very busy. I was really sorry for him spending his precious hours for me. Then, Mingma is now asking $5,000-6,000 more. The price itself might well be okay and can be no problem. However, he should have explained the detailed prices. (Personal conversation, March 30, 2013)

The irritated Korean finally turned back home right before boarding on an airplane for Kathmandu. In the middle of such conflicts due to different styles of business, Ki-Seok Seo, the director of Eurasia Trek in Seoul, told me, "If [Mingma] send me an official for a few days, I can teach him how to do the businesses" (November, 4, 2013). As he alluded, the Nepali undefined, obscure and under-rationalized system was frequently denounced as the "Nepali style," a bad national habit to be possibly amended by education.

Most Sherpas assumed that the goal of Himalayan mountaineering expeditions was to help the members reach the top, safely climb down, and finally be "happy" with all good experiences and fame that would follow. To help achieve this unquestioned goal, Sherpas and people in the Kathmandu-based agency think that what they can do is to devote most resources they can afford. By principle, this "spirit of service" for the visitors includes the voluntary Sherpa assistance of them beyond the mandatory, contract-stated accompany at the summit bid and the allocation of Sherpas to each member as well. The sum of wages and tips a Sherpa climber finally receives in his hands is difficult to—and so they rarely do—calculate by taking individual activities into

account at the moment they are performed, due to the multiple steps of value alteration built in the structure of the industry, a nation-wide social character the Nepali cosmic disposition has dictated for long; I discuss this in fuller terms in Chapter 4. In short, for Sherpa, an act is rarely subsumed directly under a category of compensation, and no clear borderline preexists between voluntary and mandatory acts in Himalayan mountaineering contexts.

5.6 Conclusion: Limit of Absolute Cosmopolitanism

With the previous chapter, this chapter has identified the ways in which Koreans understand acts of climbing, practice social relations, and privilege certain values over others. The way I present the materials in this chapter is in tandem with the way I discussed basic premises of mountaineering in Western discourse in Chapter 2. I will continue my discussion of mountaineering experience by focusing on the Sherpa perspective from the next chapter. In this way, the dissertation situates Sherpa intercultural experiences in Himalayan mountaineering in the nexus among the Western, the Korean, and the Sherpa perspectives.

To recap, contemporary Korean mountaineers understand Himalayan mountaineering and perceive Sherpas differently from Western mountaineers in notably three ways: multifarious social relation, enlightenment appeal, and soul connection. First, Korean Himalayan mountaineers and related players practice individualism and collectivism multifariously in accordance to the Confucian age hierarchy. The club-oriented collectivism has been outstanding throughout the recent history of Korean

mountaineering. Mountaineers may apply "mountaineer's gaze" when they view the mountain, and this characteristic perceptive skill is applied distinctively according to social positions in an expedition. Second, the Koreans regard highly the enlightenment as an ultimate goal of mountaineering. For them, an event of mountaineering is preferably considered a part of long-term experience. Last, the Koreans practice a twofold mind (saeng-gak and gibun) on the mountain. This allows them to connect between unspoken aspects of an individual, sometimes going beyond the life-and-death divide. This occurs within a limited social boundary and in accordance to the Confucian logic. In this overarching practice of the logic, Sherpas in expeditions are hardly considered equal members with Koreans.

The Korean-centric, absolute cosmopolitanism forms the ground of sympathy in a number of philanthropic pursuits which assert the benefit of the Nepalis. The assertion ignores what Jacqueline Fewkes (2014) describes as cosmopolitan skills that endeavor to appreciate varying thoughts or engage in the process of negotiating cultural differences. Nonetheless, the absolute cosmopolitanism plays a key role when Korean mountaineers appreciate the cultures in Nepal. This takes place under the shared Confucian hierarchy. Sharing one's unspoken thoughts and vague feelings with the other constitutes the basis of ethics for most Koreans. If a Korean does so to everyone with little variation, however, he or she has gone too far and might be reprimanded by other Koreans, for he or she both disregards the pan-familial solidarity that requires its outsider and has not spent much effort to polish the art of sharing and securing their inner mind. The mountaineer's gaze,

furthermore, is more applicable to mountaineers who prefer leadership to mere membership than to those who aim for companionship with others.

In sum, Koreans' motivation for mountain climbing is a combination of mountain appetite, desire for lifelong individual perfection, inclination toward deep-feeling sharing, and the social role for preferred or elected position within a given hierarchical grouping. There must be a great extent of variations; however, these variations are revolving around the tripartite Korean cosmic disposition.

Chapter 6. Sherpa Cosmic Disposition and Himalayan Mountaineering from a Sherpa Perspective

6.1 Introduction: Sherpa Cosmic Disposition of Individualist Collectivism, Tantric Monism, and Open-closed Chronology

Nepali journalist Kanak Mani Dixit argued in favor of commercialization of Himalayan mountain tourism, "Encouraging easier, more commercial climbing, could prove lucrative to Himalayan countries if their governments, tourism industry and native climbers took advantage" (Dixit and Risal 1992:11). He was representing the popular vision of economic development as a result of the mountain tourism industry that is widespread in Nepali societies. The contribution from the tourism industry to the economy of Nepal has been growing and represents almost ten percent of the national economy.[118] In discourses of development, Sherpas played a vital role with their monopoly on the Himalayan mountaineering tourism industry. In the early, exploratory period of the late nineteenth century, the major local population which engaged in Europeans' mountain ventures was not Sherpa but Gurkha, the Nepali soldiers in the British colonial army in India.[119] Since the first decade of the twentieth century, Sherpas

[118] Travel and Tourism contributed 8.2% of GDP in 2013 and 8.9% in 2014 to the national economy of Nepal. Also, Travel and Tourism provided 1.11 million jobs representing 7.0% of total employment in 2013 and 1.06 million jobs representing 7.5% in 2014 (World Travel and Tourism Council 2015a; 2015b). In particular, foreign expedition operators have estimated that in 2014 the international community aiming Mt. Everest alone spent more than $100 million, around 0.5% of GDP (Muhl 2014:28).

[119] A number of Gurkha soldiers were specifically trained as mountaineers and climbed Himalayan mountains starting in the 1880s with notable European mountaineers such as Martin Conway, Charles Bruce, and Alfred Mummery.

have ultimately assumed the mantle of climbing guides because, I have argued above (§3.3), Western visitors found in them exceptional qualities for mountaineering, such as cheerful demeanor and physical capability, and also because of plentiful job opportunities offered by the burgeoning labor market in early-twentieth century Darjeeling in northeastern India, for which Khumbu Sherpas joined a migratory wave (cf. Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka 2014:13).

However, economic interest, the supply-and-demand principle of the labor market, and Sherpa physiological and psychological capabilities are one side of the coin, or *potential objectivities* as I referred to objective social conditions above (§2.5). On the other hand, Sherpas engage in these objectivities through *preobjective manners* or distinctive existential conditions that are constituted and reemphasized by their everyday life in village rituals (§2.5) or naming practices (§2.6). In Chapter 4, I called the specific techniques by which the preobjective manners deal with the potential objectivities *cosmic disposition*. Cosmic disposition is the most fundamental yet distinctive set of epistemological, ontological, and ethical techniques. This conception aims not to essentialize but to relativize: a particular population's cosmic disposition becomes distinctive in opposition to others, as for example, if Nepalis are in general distinctive to Indians, there is "Nepali" cosmic disposition. If Sherpas are in general distinctive to Rais, then there is "Sherpa" cosmic disposition. If Walung Sherpas are in general distinctive to Seduwa Sherpas, then there is "Walung Sherpa" cosmic disposition. I also made it clear that this distinctiveness differs from Leach's (1976) "artificial boundary" over natural continuity (§2.4), which relies on the eurocentric culture/nature divide.

This theorization has several merits. It provides a viewpoint from which one may consider formations of epistemology, ontology, and ethics from their inception. It also helps one critically examine the epistemological, ontological, and ethical premises cultivated in eurocentric academic projects. Most important, it allows one to explore non-eurocentric forms of acting, knowing, and mattering by not assuming the eurocentric way of objectivizing as universal. Thus, a closer look at experiential phenomena related to Sherpa participation in the sport-tourism industry may reveal their cosmic disposition and its consistent making, as opposed to those of Western visitors, Koreans, and fellow Nepalis. Therefore, my aim in this chapter is to outline how Walung and Makalu Sherpas come to participate in Himalayan mountaineering, and how they appreciate their participation in reference to their larger social world. The next chapter will focus on specific experiential moments during climbing events.

To this end, I characterize the cosmic disposition of Walung Sherpas as *individualist collectivism*, *tantric monism*, and *open-closed chronology* for social, ontological, and intentional dimensions of their lives, respectively. I outline this cosmic disposition in this introduction. These characteristics are distinctive in opposition to non-Sherpa Nepalis. The disposition is manifested generally in their everyday lives and particularly in the patterns of Himalayan mountaineering in which Walung Sherpa mountaineers engage. In this chapter, I also question how this disposition keeps its own constitution in such a way. In what socioeconomic conditions do Walung Sherpas continue to commit to this preobjective rendering? How have the Sherpas dealt with abrupt global influxes and national competition through this particular disposition? To

what extent is their cosmic disposition resonant with superficial or visible particularities in the course of their lives?

A methodology to engage these questions also requires a critical inspection. The tripartite schematization of Sherpa cosmic disposition relies on discussions of ethnographic materials and historical analysis rather than genealogical analysis of historical texts—as I employed when I identified Korean cosmological disposition in Chapter 3—partly because such texts deal less with Sherpa lives due to the very character of this disposition. The privilege of textual materials is hermeneutically reliable for identification of Korean as well as Western characters. In other words, both Koreans and Westerners have long attempted to document their understanding of themselves, so that an observation of the documents may allow one to glimpse the epistemological approach. Because both traditions have bolstered dualism (though differently) to isolate mentality from materiality by abstraction, maintaining logophilic traditions, there exists a colossal accumulation of written descriptions of, and opinions about, discernible aspects of their lives. As an epistemological disposition, this dualism allows one to possibly identify cosmic dispositions of both Westerners and Koreans, using their respective terms genealogically. In short, written materials by themselves manifest a peculiar epistemology. In their brute form, further, they also manifest ontology and ethics (e.g. Hyecho's journey seeking the original Buddhist scripture, §4.4).

However, tantric monism, an ontological aspect of Sherpa cosmic disposition, resists abstraction from tangible reality, abstraction that makes human acts emerge from the ground in the form of thoughts. According to tantrism—"tantric" in Sanskrit literally

means esoteric—the principle of continuity and distinction that ratifies the dualisms of acting and knowing and of humans and external forces is considered esoteric and remains ambiguous to the lay people.[120] It seems that this doctrinal understanding of the epistemological connection between subject and object, as a widespread character across South Asia and Tibet, is also applicable among Walung Sherpas. To draw this characterization, I partly rely on discussions of Tibetan Buddhism and Tantrism because I regard religion as, at one extreme, a description of people's patterned spiritual life. In essence, esoteric tantrism with its antinomian predisposition (Flood 1996:149) transforms or deconstructs dualistic cultural and linguistic presuppositions which are replaced by monistic or non-dualistic experience (Timalsina 2014). In short, acts substitute for and are privileged over thoughts.[121] A simple example is that, when Sherpas recollect their experiences of Himalayan mountaineering, their descriptions exhibit a pattern: how many members and Sherpas participated, how many people reached the top, how much in tips they received, what, if any, accidents happened, and so on. This privileging of external realities contrasts with, for example, the Korean practice of "soul connection," a practice which is epistemologically and existentially real to Korean mountaineers (§5.4), as they tend to focus on the manner of using their minds (§5.2).

In the making of Walung Sherpa epistemology, historical formation of the tantric connection between act and thought results from two historical processes: a Tibetan

[120] Tucci argues, "It is evident that the magical and gnostic foundations of Tantrism lend their unmistakable imprint to the whole Lamaist way of thinking and practice. This applies not only to the liturgical structure but also in the formation of the entire mode of living directed towards the goal of salvation" (Tucci 1970:93).

[121] Historically, the word Tantra denotes a particular genre of spiritual teachings that "affirm the continuity between Spirit and matter" (Feuerstein 1998:2).

variation of Mahayana Buddhism and unperformed monasticism. Mahayana Buddhism, doctrinal foundation of Tibetan Buddhism, has less emphasis on "cognitive belief" than Theravada Buddhism (a sect some Kathmandu dwellers practice; Gellner 1992:132-4). This cognitive belief refers to a conscious and cognitive form of Buddhist belief that posits that Buddha was merely a supremely meritorious dead man, not a god, and that the religious merit one may obtain will not be transferred to others or to one's next life. By contrast, in Mahayana Buddhism, "affective" connection—in the sense that the merit can be transferred—is stressed by leaving the doctrinal position relatively unclear, thus sustaining esotericism.

Not only is there this spiritually practical reinforcement of esotericism, but institutionalization of Buddhism by foundation of temples has also provided a social basis for enduring esotericism. From the fifteenth century, Tibetan Buddhism has emphasized strict monasticism, which represented an orthopractic fundamentalism (i.e. focused on right practice, not Tantra) by restricting—while allowing—the use of tantric ritualisms (Gellner 1992:99). After migrating into Nepal starting in the sixteenth century (§2.3), Sherpas have consistently made efforts to keep monastic ideals within their communities by founding temples (Ortner 1989). However, those Sherpas in northern Sankhuwasabha (Walung, Seduwa, and Yaphu) have not yet founded a monastery, though many of them are eager to do so. No institutionalization took place for accreditation of a mythic cultural hero (Ortner 1989) or for the integration of the statuses of a monk, householder, and priest into a single hierarchical system (Gellner 1992). Unable to perform rituals on a regular basis that would bring them into contact with their gods, Sherpas in the area lived

for generations in relative spiritual isolation. They have wanted to rectify this.[122] In turn, the nonexistence of monks and monastery in the community has likely helped tantric ritualisms to flourish as they are (§2.4). Thus, a historical facet of Walung Sherpa's religious life presents a theoretical basis for the tantric monism, an aspect of their cosmic disposition.

Further, the spiritual isolation from gods has influenced interpersonal isolation and augmented individualism.[123] From this, one may figure out a historical formation of individualist collectivism, a social aspect of the disposition. Partly due to the lack of any monastery, the Sherpa community of upper Walung has no political center at all, contrary to the Khumbu Sherpa community (Ortner 1989). There is neither salient political authority nor lopsided distribution of intra-village factionalism. The Sherpa village is a relatively pure aggregation of thirteen settlements with little variation in economic, political, and religious assets. Meanwhile, clans are unequally distributed among the settlements: for example, Nurbuchaaur, the largest settlement of twenty three households, is home to eight Mapcha families; all three households in Tala Kharka are Ssalaka; three of the four households in Nishar are Thinggriba; and so on. However, this liberal distribution of clan factions may merely mean the nonexistence of village-centralized

[122] Irregularly yet roughly once a month, Sherpas of Walung have conducted *lamathyolden*, where villagers gather at one of the highest village lamas' house to observe a puja. However, a few Sherpas complained about the "small size" of the puja, size referring to both the house and the amount of expected merit.

[123] It is still questionable to what extent individualism preceded monasticism among Tibetan Buddhists. Snellgrove observed a considerable degree of practiced individualism in the lives of monks in Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. "Perhaps what is most impressive about these people," he noted, "is their strong sense of personal responsibility and their wide freedom of action. The monks are all there on their own responsibility, subject only to their obedience to an older monk, if they choose to ask him to be their master" (Snellgrove 1957:220).

political power, supporting egalitarianism. The settlements are in turn a set of households, each of which economically stands alone, loosely connected with neighboring cousins. As for an individual's life, from early years, around ten years old, members of each household scatter out to the vast Himalayan plateau or faraway places to engage in various labors. They begin to be treated as adults with no coming-of-age ceremonial step.

Ortner (1989) has identified among Sherpas of Solukhumbu key contradictions between egalitarianism and hierarchy and between selfishness and egolessness. Along with these contradictions, I suggest that the augmented individualism above has constituted the individualist part of the individualist collectivism practiced by the Sherpas. With regard to the collectivist part, it pertains to the nationwide *aftno manchhe* practice. Afno manchhe literally means "one's own people" and colloquially refers to one's inner circle of associates, practiced widely in Nepal as well as among Walung Sherpas (Chapter 2). Chapter 2 illustrated how Sherpas of Walung identify themselves in different contexts (epistemology), and this chapter focuses on their locating their selves in various groupings (ontology). There is a Nepali saying, "our person (N. *hamro manchhe*) is preferred over good, competent person (N. *ramro manchhe*)." This custom of privileging interpersonal connection over individual competency has been denounced by Nepali scholars and critics who argue that it was the basis of corruption and caste factionalism widespread in the society (Bista 1991; Caplan 1971; Subedi 2005; 2014). Interestingly, Alex Kondos (1987) criticized these critical commentators as being "Westernized." Indeed, in the scholarly literature, the reciprocity embedded in the

principle has been largely interpreted from a utilitarian point of view. For example, Dor Bahadur Bista emphasized the utilizable aspect of the afno manchhe principle, by which one "can be approached whenever need arises" (Bista 1991:98).[124] However, prior to being extended to any serviceable purposes, the afno manchhe principle is primarily a local logic of collective connection at interpersonal levels.

The following anecdote illustrates this. When I was waiting for a flight to Tumlingtar (the airport town of Sankhuwasabha district) at the Tribhuvan Airport in Kathmandu, my companion Sanu (Walung) approached an elderly woman attired as a Sherpa. We soon learned that she was from Phunki Tenga, a small settlement in Khumbu for which she was heading. Sanu and the woman's conversation quickly identified a common acquaintance from the town, whom Sanu referred to as "our person" (N. *hamro manchhe*) to her delight. Even though they talked in Nepali, the Sherpa habitual word "*lasse*," an interjectional remark of respect and favor, now followed almost every sentence to facilitate their friendly and intimate conversation. In fact, the Walung dialect of the term is "*lasso*," but Sanu kept using the term in the Khumbu style (i.e. "lasse"; August 12, 2013). This everyday formation of afno manchhe circle does not necessarily anticipate, at least directly, reciprocal or exclusive favorable exchanges. Sanu's linguistic adjustment in the lady's favor apparently sought after little, if any, benefit for his own sake. Moreover, members of the circle do not always expect better results from the connection. For example, the centripetal (centralizing) tendency of Walung Sherpas'

[124] Criticizing the corruptive appropriation of the principle, Subedi further argues that "the people in everyday life try to develop afno manchhe relationship strategically to achieve something" (Subedi 2014:58).

internal networks might hinder them from exploring jobs that would pay higher wages. Indeed, one might even argue that, because afno manchhe practices are stratified in terms of caste, a Nepali finds it hard to expect to apply for diverse jobs. In this chapter, I examine the specific collectivism through which Sherpas habitualize the nationwide afno mancche principle.

Lastly, the open-closed chronology exhibited by the Sherpas differs from "fatalism" by which one expects and accepts the unknown future in a somewhat helpless manner claimed by Bista (1991) as for a characteristic of Hindu high-caste populations. Briefly, "fatalistic perspective," according to him, is "the most powerful subculture of all the Nepali people" (ibid., 76). He argues that this perspective involves "no free will or choice in decision-making, nor in how an event will unfold. Agreement can only be made subject to fate" (ibid., 83). To be sure, Bista tries to avoid essentializing fatalism as a sort of grounding national ethos but to relativize recurrent values and personality by locating them within a historical map of interethnic integration in the country. He suggests that fatalism is a worldview shared by several ethnic and caste groups including Bahun, Chhetri, Newar, and a few others who adopted the orthodox Hindu ontology for the sake of national political power. In short, fatalism, he argues, is a historical product. Though I endorse his emphasis on the Foucauldian genealogical approach to distinctive characters, his concept is problematic primarily because he neglects the gap between act and understanding or, in my own terminology, between preobjectivity and objectivity. Similarly, Gellner observed among Newar Buddhists in the Kathmandu Valley differences of that gap and noted,

> [A]ll fortunes and misfortunes are the result of one's own *karma*, therefore pull yourself together, devote yourself to the gods and doing *dharma* [religious performance], and it will be all right … although all the other terms are passive, that is, refer to states which befall a person, there is in fact considerable latitude in how strictly one observes them, at least among castes other than high-caste Hindus. (Gellner 1992:119, 205)

I suspect Walung Sherpas display such "considerable latitude" more than the Newar Buddhists who exhibited the latitude more than their fellow Newar Hindus. In any event, in the open-closed chronology, potential outcomes reside in the future rather than in the past, and understanding of the asymmetry of temporality and lopsided intentionality requires a chronology that radically differs from Western or Korean chronologies. This chronology impels one to be prepared for a strategic attitude for various possible events of the future, as if the variety of choices towards the future options is wide *open*. Following von Fürer-Haimendorf's (1963) concept *open society* referring to the characteristic Sherpa ease and flexibility towards what are extrinsic to them, I call this appreciation of the future "open future." By contrast, the past is *closed*: frustrations about wrongdoings in the past and, more generally, astute recollections of the past are less significant than thorough attention toward what has just happened and deliberating and planning for the multiple possibilities of the open future, in a way fairly democratic in juxtaposing the possibilities.

The roughly hypothesized Sherpa cosmic disposition provides an epistemological, ontological, and ethical groundwork based on which one may further examine their experiences of Himalayan mountaineering. The groundwork is tripartite: individualist

collectivism, tantric monism, and open-closed chronology. This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section outlines Walung Sherpa's semi-migratory lives in Kathmandu. It describes their reordering practices of cosmic orders in accordance to the new environment. The second section provides an overview of Walung Sherpas' general understanding of participation in Himalayan mountaineering through the identified cosmic disposition. The third section focuses on economic relationships among hired Nepali staff, expedition organizers, and client climbers. I detail various segments of the wage system in Himalayan mountaineering. The fourth section investigates Walung Sherpas' ethical approach to mountaineering participation. For them, Himalayan mountaineering is at once an arena where they express their masculine identity and a gathering where they socialize in their own manner. The fifth section deals with Walung Sherpas' utilization of their international connections obtained from mountaineering experiences. Following this discussion, the last section discusses how a few Walung Sherpas envision their future. In all this, Walung Sherpas' cosmic disposition is recurring and resonating with various dimensions of their lives. This discussion will also allow one to consider how a distinctive cosmic disposition keeps extending its shape and trajectory.

6.2 Sherpas' Semi-Migratory Life in Kathmandu: Dynamic Practices of Belonging

In this section I suggest that the principle of autochthony practiced across Nepal operates not categorically but contextually and compels Sherpas of Walung to practice belonging *dynamically*, often resulting in multiple identity-making. By framing the notion of belonging contextually, I argue that the dynamicity apparent in the practices of

belonging revolves around the grounding cosmic orders, which are ordered and reordered in the migratory lifestyle of Walung Sherpas.

Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka distinguish between the concepts of belonging and identity, stating, "You may identify, but not feel that you belong, in the sense of being accepted or being a full member" (Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka 2014:xvi).[125] They characterize belonging as "inward-oriented," whereas identity is "oriented from outside to inside" (ibid.). This dichotomous, two-dimensional view of human groupings lacks a perspective that may indicate a pragmatic configuration of perception, the approach I postulated above (§1.2) as pragmatic phenomenology. The dichotomy sustaining Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka's (2014b) conception is reminiscent of the "anthromantic" assumption, that is, a Romantic assumption of human nature found outside the West (§3.3). The assumption results in an adaptation of the Western disciplinary division to an understanding of non-Western populations, such that individual feeling (psychology) and social agreement (sociology) but nothing else are considered to play the key roles in "attachment" making: "Intimacy and collective memory, on the one hand, as well as entitlements and regulations, on the other, forge very strong ties to places" (ibid., xxi). This anthromantic view follows an ahistorical approach to social relationship, as long as it neglects enduring characteristics of actors in feeling affection and approval—the diversity of cosmic disposition becomes flat. In the context of Nepal in particular, it also risks falling into the trap of essentializing autochthonous identity.

[125] Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka (2014:xxi) use the basic idea of the sense of belonging from the book written by Carol Lee Flinders, *The Values of Belonging: Rediscovering Balance, Mutuality, Intuition, and Wholeness in a Competitive World* (2002).

6.2.1 External Integration and Internal Collection

If the cosmic orders ground the dynamic practices of belonging, the question is, how are the cosmic orders ordered or reordered? I suggested above (§2.4) that Kathmandu (S: Yembu) is anchored or *focused* as a significant other place in the cosmic order for the village people, sustained and reemphasized through a variety of village rituals that also *orient* temporal cycles. To wit, Kathmandu as an existentially meaningful place spatio-temporally exists for the Sherpas in the village, which is paired with the village territory and life-cycle. In Kathmandu, this spatio-temporal binary that structures Sherpa cosmic order is re-habituated: the order is newly focused and oriented in reference to the distinct circumstance in which the Sherpas find themselves in the capital. This actualization of Sherpa cosmic disposition is made through a twofold cosmic process: *external integration* (typically applied by most Nepalis) and *internal collection* (typically applied by Walung and Makalu Sherpas). In this re-habituation and rebuilding of their cosmic order, one may glimpse aspects of the Sherpa cosmic disposition that persists through their economic activities, formations of settlements and organizations, and everyday lives in and outside their community. It is a threefold disposition I reckon as individualist collectivism, tantric monism, and open-closed chronology.

Whether having fully migrated to Kathmandu or moving between their hometowns and the city, most of Walung Sherpas in Kathmandu stay in and around a town named Akasidhara in the Kapan district at the northeastern corner of the capital. Kapan is home to the large Kapan Monastery, which is adjacent to the so-called Boudha

area that nestles the World Heritage Site, Boudhanath. From the 1960s through the 1980s, those Sherpas of Khumbu who were interested in the booming mountaineering and trekking industry moved to Kathmandu and formed a concentration in a sector named Jyatha, which is next to the congested tourist town Thamel (Fisher 1990; Woodhead 1977). Once considered a suburb of the expanding city, the Boudha area is now home to tens of thousands of migrants from various parts of the country and the population is still increasing. Their religious practices are akin to Tibetan Buddhism, unlike those of the long-time Kathmandu dweller Newar's Buddhism (largely Vajrayana). Migration is a remarkably important component of livelihood strategies in most Himalayan villages today (Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka 2014b). The increasing migrants include thousands of Sherpas originating from various districts including Dolakha, Sindhupalchowk, Solukhumbu, Sankhuwasabha and Taplejung in northern to far northeastern Nepal

While some Walung Sherpas told me that they chose to live in Kapan because of the proximity to the grand Buddhist shrine and temples, it was indeed uncommon for most of the Sherpas of Akasidhara circumambulate the gigantic chorten in Boudhanath and invoke merits on a daily basis, as many of those who live near the monument do. The real cause for them to reside in Akasidhara and the vicinity seems not for the sake of the ostensible religious purpose; it simply seems that they wished to live close to one another. In this section, I focus on the significance of this residential aggregation as the Sherpas cosmically accommodate to the new environment.

As I noted in Chapter 2(§2.1), both Walung and Seduwa Sherpas in Kathmandu refer to themselves as "Makalu Sherpa" when talking to Khumbu Sherpas, non-Sherpa

Nepalis, or foreign visitors. Most of the time both Walung and Seduwa Sherpas speak to each other in the regional Sherpa dialect, though often with a recognizable difference between the two. They also use Nepali to converse with one another, frequently switching from one language to another according to the context. They do not share this language play with non-Makalu Sherpas as they continually mingle with non-Makalu Sherpas and non-Sherpa Nepalis in Kathmandu. Around two thousand Sankhuwasabha Sherpas (including children) live with tens of thousands other Nepalis in and around Akasidhara. The majority of them is Makalu Sherpa. Few Sherpas owned their houses, and most live in rooms rented from non-Nepali, mostly Hindu, home owners.

A Walung-origin town dweller living there more than ten years attributed Makalu Sherpas coming to reside collectively in and around Akasidhara to the presence of two businesses: Eleven Diamond (ED), a restaurant with a snooker hall, and Seven Summit Treks and Expedition (SST), a prosperous expedition agency managed by four Sherpa brothers who originated from Walung. ED, simply called "snooker," is located in a relatively leisurely sector of Akasidhara, which, during the period of my field research, served as a main social center for most Makalu Sherpas in Kathmandu. The snooker hall opened in the autumn of 2011, followed a year later by the restaurant. The co-directors of ED are Pasang Sherpa of Walung (head proprietor) and Khunga Sherpa of Solu. Khunga is the brother-in-law (WS. *makpa*) of Pasang. The thriving place, which employed about eight servers, hosted idle Makalu Sherpa male adults at all times of day, who were not only playing snooker or eating food but chatting, watching TV, teasing the employees, playing smart-phone games and so on. One separate room was often put into use for



Figure 6-1. Eleven Diamond in Akasidhara. Pasang, the youngest brother of Mingma and one of the directors of Seven Summit Treks, stands in front of the restaurant on July, 17, 2012. Photo by the author.

business meetings, organization committee gatherings, or private dining for loving couples. About five smaller restaurants managed by Sherpas served as social centers for the Sherpa men of the area as well. Across the street from ED, for example, was a smaller diner managed by two Sherpa sisters from Solukhumbu, both in their early twenties. Their menu is largely identical, yet the foods are cheaper and arguably tastier than those of ED, attracting younger Sherpas to socialize as well as fill up their bellies.

SST is central to the economic activities of Walung Sherpa men in Kathmandu (not Makalu Sherpas in general). Founded in 2008 and managed by four brothers from Nurbuchaaur, the uppermost settlement of Walung, SST has in recent years enjoyed a thriving business specializing in high-altitude mountaineering. Among the sixteen hundred registered trekking agencies in Nepal (as of 2013), SST paid the largest sum of

taxes in the 2013 fiscal year. This burgeoning chiefly owed to their bargaining expeditions, as the costs foreign clients paid were generally cheaper than other agencies. The managing director is thirty-four-year-old Mingma, the first Nepali who topped all fourteen over-eight-thousand-meter peaks (completed in 2011). Throughout his climbs, as either a high-altitude worker or later as a climber aiming for the summit, he acquainted himself with the logistics and circumstances of mountaineering and acquired personal connections with local and global partners, all of which helped him organize highly specialized expeditions with comparatively low expenses. He expressed a few times to me his vision of both providing low-cost expeditions that could help more climbers realize their mountain dreams—dreams with which he heartily sympathized—and, at the same time, creating more employment options for his fellow villagers and other jobless Nepalis. He has been successful so far in both components of his visionary business: hundreds of jobs were made available for Makalu Sherpas (especially for Walung Sherpas) as well as other Sherpas and Nepalis, while other agencies, especially those that cost more and provide Western guide services, have lost their potential clients. Before the prosperity of SST, for decades Sherpa men from Walung were able to intermittently procure job positions as climbing guides, trekking guides, kitchen helpers, and lowland porters via various agencies that hired them as a result of hard-won connections.[126] In recent years, however, even a few Walung Sherpas who had previously little experience of technical mountaineering and made little effort to build up connections with the

[126] This does not mean that before the prosperity of SST few Makalu Sherpas climbed high mountains. Bokalama summited Mt. Everest eight times in total throughout 1980s, while he kept living in his natal village, Nurbuchaaur, the uppermost settlement in Walung.

agency personnel as well, could realistically envision, as they did, to participate in expeditions as climbing guides. Accordingly, many Makalu Sherpas consider Mingma as the leader of their community (MS: *adakchye*, N: *thulo manche*, "big man"), and the hired guides seemed generally pleased by being a member of a larger group on Mt. Everest, K2, Manaslu, Ama Dablam, and other high Himalayan mountains popular for guided mountaineering. In 2012, he moved the agency office from a rented building to his newly built four-story house on top of a hill in Akasidhara overlooking the Kathmandu valley.

With these social and economic centers in the town, Walung and Makalu Sherpas focus the axis of their cosmic order on that locus. This reordering process takes place with the dynamic formation of their sense of belonging. Once considered dangerous overall, Kathmandu now accommodates a distinctive place for the Sherpas to dwell in comfort. This cosmic accommodation process can be dissected in centrifugal-centripetal phases of dynamic belonging-forming: *external integration* and *internal collection*. An anecdote illustrates this process. Once I made a visit with Pasang (younger brother of Mingma, not the director of ED) to one of the government offices in Kathmandu, located distant from Kapan. Around the office, a number of procurers who help issue government documents in a faster (albeit more costly) manner were loitering about and hawking their services. After being assisted by this shrewdness that greased the administrative wheels, Pasang simply noted, "These are very different people" (August 5, 2013). His pithy statement expresses the dual cosmic accommodation process: similarity is secured from finding out differences in ethnic, linguistic, occupational, and territorial manners. A

Sherpa needs to, first, discover what makes others different and, second, maintain the emerging similarity against the difference.

Firstly, the difference is manifested through the external integration of diverse ethnic populations and their cultures without involving direct antagonism. Afno manchhe principle is in the figure-ground relationship with what Bista identifies as *integration*—by which the Nepalis "integrate a plurality of belief and ritual systems rather than submit to the subjugation or overthrow of their treasured traditions" (Bista 1991:33). As much as individuals identify themselves as connected through the everyday afno manche principle and find similarity among themselves, they find divergences from the others. The internal-external relationship is therefore centrifugal. The ground upon which all this discovery of sameness and otherness takes place is provided by the integrative character, which is shared by most Nepali citizens. The external integration is the most longstanding and fundamental cosmic disposition of Nepalis, recorded in their ancient history and persisted thereafter in many different features, a traditionally nationwide characteristic often celebrated as peaceful harmony by themselves as well as praised by tourists. This characteristic is valued, for example, in comparison to Indians who are allegedly not, so as to be sanctioned as a national characteristic. Toffin also noted that, although religion in Nepal had not been dissociated from the state and official functions until recently, Hindu Nepalis have kept seemingly a tolerant and conciliatory attitude toward Buddhism and other faiths (Toffin 2013: Ch.2). As a Nepali journalist affirms, "communities throughout Nepal are dispersed with pluralities but no majorities" (Gyawali 2013). This external integration is an overarching principle for social and political formations across Nepal.

This integration hardly means pure equality or perfect inclusion. Gellner (1992) points out that this pervasive "moral and religious relativism" is tacitly restricted to the Hinduism and Buddhism of the Kathmandu valley. Both religious traditions are considered to share "a charmed inner circle, or truer or higher religion," while other religions are regarded as a lower version of Hinduism and Buddhism (ibid., 88-9). A number of those who adopted Christianity were reportedly imprisoned in the 1990s (Majupuria and Kumar 2013:342). Thus, the relativism that assumes and acquiesces different forms of life kept by each caste/ethnic group, each temple, and even each family employs lopsided respects toward respective others. Relativism and respect do not correspond each other, and this hollow harmony constitutes the principle of external integration in Nepal.

Walung Sherpas collectively participate in this nationwide heterogeneity. In their contemporary, urban form of external integration, the Sherpas recognize several ethnic differences in their everyday life in Kathmandu. The ethnic differences are least likely known in the villages in northern Sankhuwasabha. Sherpas interact with non-Sherpa ethnic populations, such as Tamang, Rai, Bhote, and Chhetri, recognizing one another by each of their originated villages rather than by interpersonal skills that are rational, utilitarian, and far from being autochthonous.

Not only do the Sherpas find ethnic differences in Kathmandu through external integration, but they actively maintain similarity among themselves emerging from the pervading differences by applying particular strategies characterized by internal collection. Gellner argued that Kathmandu dwellers kept to outsiders "superficial

openness" on the one hand, and, on the other, extreme exclusiveness or the "sense of introversion," which is resulted from the caste hierarchy and insecurity involved in the national, inter-ethnic hierarchical system (Gellner 1992:307-317). A visible method for the integration is the geographical formation of collective settlements in Akasidhara. This approach is shared by several other ethnic groups especially in the Boudha area. This internally collective inclination seems more active for the Sherpas and a few other ethnic groups than the majority of Hindu groups in the country. Religion (Boudhanath), economy (SST), and socialization (ED) are three of the main factors that drew the Sherpa individuals to the internally collective territorial occupation. Since no internally collective practices occur without resonating with patterned cultural customs, in the context of the migratory wave, reordering of cosmic world conspicuously takes place through transformation of the customs.

6.2.2 Cultural Transformations: Consumption of Chhang and Gender Roles

This reordering process induced by migration involves transformations of Sherpa cultural lives in many respects. I describe two interrelated features that exemplify the transformation: consumption of *chhang* (millet, barley, or corn beer; N. *jara*) and gender relationship.

Most of the Sherpas in Walung regard Kathmandu as a mixture of pros and cons. On the one hand, Kathmandu is a fun, exciting, and full-of-opportunity place. On the other hand, it is a place of peoples foreign to them, and therefore it can be dangerous to live there. The atmosphere of Kathmandu is generally considered sober, business-

oriented, and sometimes greedy. For the fun-loving Sherpas (§5.3), staying sober (expressed as not enjoying drinking) most of the time is not always welcome. The profuse chhang consumption conventional in upper Walung is absent in the city. Chhang consumption became a paradoxical symbol of both primitivity of their village life and the essence of their identity.

In the village contexts, Sherpas rarely consider chhang a sort of liquor, although excessive consumption would lead to intoxication. Instead, it is regarded as a vital source of physical health and strength. For example, a Sherpa man with ample mountaineering experience jokingly suggested for my plan to climb Mt. Everest without using oxygen, saying, "Bring chhang to Camp Four [the highest camp of the mountain]" (January 13, 2013). For Sherpa men, being physically strong is of a prime concern at both village life and mountaineering participation. To this, chhang consumption is a handy and effective method. Further, while an excessive chhang consumption might well drive drinkers sick, Walung Sherpas often attribute the sickness to certain kinds of chhang instead of chhang in general, so the kind of chhang matters. One of the merits of being in the village is that one can enjoy the village chhang (*gaunko chhang* or *yulki chhang*), which, most of the Sherpas would say, "does not make you sick because it is good." To grow and crop millet, barley, corn, and potato every year and to prepare chhang by fermenting these crops for months obviously constitute major chores of Sherpa village lives, especially those of women (§5.3.2). Moreover, the people would laugh at a household where chhang has run out. An infrequent comment that "this house's chhang is not tasty" might potentially become a severe insult to the referred family as well as a humorous

humiliating if used towards one's own household. Referring to some houses as we were walking by, a few close Sherpa friends of mine whispered to me this kind of comment with a serious face, to keep me aware of an intra-village ostracization.

However, the Sherpa mountaineer's suggestion above remains a hollow joke. In reality, no Sherpa would consider appropriate to drink chhang or any other alcoholic beverage beyond Base Camp during mountaineering, in contrast to the village life where the villagers routinely carry bottles of chhang to their workplaces in the high plains. Sherpas would enjoy chhang in Kathmandu only at ceremonial gatherings such as Losar (Tibetan New Year's Day) or wedding parties. In these special occasions, as in the village, Sherpa ladies still distribute chhang to the participants and urge them to swallow it. Yet, it is certainly devoid of the meanings that are obvious in the village (§5.3.2), as both the server and the served would take the Kathmandu-purchased drink merely as a ritualized courtesy, so that one cup of chhang is enough for the ritualized drinking and no one would solicit another to drink hard. Nor is an obligatory feeling attached to one's half-finished cup of chhang, whereas in the village the server would customarily break in the conversations of the served and solicit them to finish the cup to fill it again. Therefore, chhang consumption that is no longer cordially practiced in the capital plays the role of identity making pivoting on the imagined village, as a practice of internal collection for the urban dwellers.

In particular, the tradition-modernity transition exemplified in the Kathmandu dwellers' notion of chhang consumption is linked to gender divisions. The social and economic scope of Sherpa women's urban life is limited compared to the village. Most of

the time, they normally stay inside their own or close kinsmen's houses. Men rarely drop by each other's place as much as they do in the village. Should one visit a Sherpa friend's home in Akasidhara, they would be served, instead of chhang, a cup of coffee or Fanta, quickly purchased from small stores with money the husband or father gave to his wife or daughter at that moment. Beer may be served at a dinner table, though there is no chhang, not to mention *arak* (a locally distilled alcoholic beverage).

This transition of gender role has an implication for gendered perception of the migratory life. Some Walung Sherpa women said they did not want to move to live in Kathmandu. Like several Walung Sherpa men, Sanu (the person in the opening anecdote) essentially keeps, and seasonally moves between, two homes in Walung and in Kathmandu. I call this migratory pattern "semi-migration." He has two reasons to do so: expedition participation and children's education. His wife and three younger daughters live in Nishar, while a seventeen-year-old son and a fifteen-year-old daughter are schooling in Kathmandu. During climbing seasons—spring and autumn—he has joined expeditions for more than ten years, so far climbing eight-thousand-meter peaks fifteen times. In the autumn of 2014, he refurbished his house in Nishar. He said,

> Nurbu (the son) will continue to stay in Kathmandu. But I won't sell out my house and land here at Nishar (Walung). My wife doesn't want to move to Khandbari (the municipal capital of Sankhuwasabha) or Kathmandu since she does not speak Nepali." (Personal conversation, January 17, 2013).

Her occasional Nepali sounded fluent though, to a degree she would hardly face much difficulty to live everyday life outside the village. Rather than the language competency,

the urban context where the national language has to be spoken is perhaps what caused her aversion. To this decision, Nurbu, his single son, was, Sanu recollected, confused and asked, "I am learning English here [in Kathmandu], but why do you want to rebuild the house in Walung?" It is a continuing custom for the Sherpas that the youngest son shall live with (or near) his parents until they pass away. Sanu wrapped up this vexing issue without explicitly giving his opinion, yet joking, "My wife is the king of my house." Traditionally, Sherpa wives seemed to have enjoyed the more powerful position in their own families than most other ethnic groups in the country.[127] By contrast, in Kathmandu, Sherpa women's participation in household economy and in social life, such as the beverage serving, are remarkably limited. It seems questionable whether Sherpa wives would continue to be the "king" of their respective homes.[128]

However, this rare resistance against the encroaching wave of modernization through migration, often expressed in such a gendered way (cf. Basnet 2011), has gained little support. Recently, education of children became a common concern for most Nepalis as well as the Sherpas, and has provided an unavoidable reason to move outside the village. Many younger Sherpa parents consider having more than two or three children primitive. It is at least hard to afford economically. They consider fine education one of the most important requirements when raising their children, so that many chose to

[127] A non-Sherpa Nepali informant described Sherpani (Sherpa women) as "too dangerous (*khatra*)." "For example," he said, "she orders her husband to do everything—'please go [a faraway place to do a work] and come back home today'; 'please do the cooking'; and so on. No Gurungni or Tamangni does that."
[128] My view contrasts to some Nepali commentators. Sagun Lawoti argues for capitalization of the society, envisioning a realization of gender equity: "[A]n expansive capitalistic order and the fall of old modes of production provided a fertile ground for … many micro-revolutions and mutinies at the household level" (Lawoti 2013).

move to Kathmandu. Several Sherpa mothers would find no reason to stay back in the villages when their kids are schooling in cities.

In sum, Walung and Makalu Sherpas' migratory life in Kathmandu involve dual principles of external integration and internal collection. The semi-migration is a characteristic feature exhibited by several Walung Sherpas. The dynamicity in practices of belonging—belonging as not a fixed or rather permanent component of social life—conceptualizes their perceptions under this social-structural scheme. The lives that conform to this scheme display cultural transformations and often resistances to the transformations.

6.3 Sherpas' General Appreciation of Mountaineering Participation

"Rai carry loads; Gorkha serve the army; and Sherpa go to the mountain," Tendi Sherpa once lyricized to me. Nepal had long been a Hindu kingdom until 2008 when the republicanism was declared. Caste system has been solidified in both memory and practice of the citizens. Under the overarching principle, the boundary between occupations is conventionally equated with the boundary between groups of people. In Walung exists technically only one occupational caste group, Kami (blacksmith) in lower Walung. While not all Rai, Gorkha, or Sherpa occupy themselves in accordance to Tendi's characterization, the inter-ethnic differences in their respective viewpoints are nonetheless increasingly interpreted as occupational divisions. The nationwide drift of "asserting ethnic identity" (Guneratne 2002) after the 1990 people's movement has in

part taken place drawing from the classical notion of caste.[129] In this section, I discuss this combination of occupation and ethnicity when Walung Sherpas consider participation in Himalayan mountaineering. I further detail the custom of concluding contracts regarding mountaineering labors.

6.3.1 Mountaineering as a Sherpa Vocation

Walung Sherpas consider participation in Himalayan mountaineering (N. *himal charnu*, literally to climb a Himalayan mountain) their ethnic vocation. The participation normally takes from a week to around two months. Many Walung Sherpa men aged between twenty to forty years engage in the vocation multiple times a year. On "the mountain," Sherpas may participate in one or more activities including guiding a team as a "team guide," climbing high mountains as a "climbing Sherpa," guiding foreign mountain climbers as a "climbing guide," cooking at Base Camp or Advanced Base Camp as cook, helping at the kitchen as a "kitchen helper," supporting foreign trekkers as a "trekking Sherpa," and carrying loads throughout the trekking as a "lowland porter" among others. The vocation basically involves moving between places, eating at different locations, and spending nights in hotel rooms, dining halls, kitchens, or tents. Once the moving labor is completed, they come back to their hometown, whether village or Kathmandu, to relax as well as engage in house chores.

[129] The practice and notion of caste, as known today in Nepali society, were in fact shared only among the Gupta. They are now called Bahun. They migrated from the West to contemporary Nepal around the eighth century, withdrawing from the anti-Hindu oppression implemented by the Muslim invaders from the far west (Bista 1991).

This patterned Sherpa male lifestyle may be referred to as *semi-nomadism* (differently from *semi-migration*), which Sherpa men have long practiced in the form of transhumance in village contexts. Still today, as observed in the 1980s Khumbu Sherpa society by Stanley Stevens (1993), some Walung Sherpa men stay in seasonal *kharka*s (S. mountain hut) to herd cattle, spending much of each year outside their home. This semi-nomadic form of life should not only refer to transhumance or pastoralism: since the 1960s, a number of Walung Sherpa men engaged in, for example, carrying loads for many days as hired by mountaineering expeditions or other interregional labors. Sherpa women, on the other hand, take part in regular village chores including hard labors, such as gathering firewood, farming in the fields around the village, or feeding pigs, chickens, water buffaloes. Few lowlanders in Nepal practice this particular gendered lifestyle; the semi-nomadic form of Walung Sherpa male life is distinctive from lowlanders.

Walung Sherpas envision mountaineering as Sherpa men's vocation through the duality of external and internal social logics. For the Sherpas, the mountain tourism industry is a relatively new, exciting option for their livelihood, though fitting well to the longstanding mobile Sherpa male lifestyle. The assertion "Sherpa go to the mountain" expresses this ideal in the contemporary and nonlocal context. I estimate that Makalu Sherpas hold around one fourth of the entire population of Sherpa mountaineers active in the contemporary Himalayan mountaineering industry. While it is difficult to gather reliable census data on that matter, along with my observations, multiple Makalu Sherpas' repeated characterizations make this conjecture realistic. Twenty-six-year-old Tenjing (Seduwa) stereotyped the demographic trend. He said, "Solukhumbu Sherpas

went abroad. Sindhupalchowk Sherpas also went abroad to work, like Dubai and Qatar. Rolwaling Sherpas no more climb mountains like before. Now it is Makalu Sherpas who climb the mountains" (Personal conversation, October 20, 2015). This lumping their internal diversity of occupation into a single category of mountaineering conforms to the national habit of caste system, as the Sherpas, as well as many previously marginal ethnic groups in the country, become "Nepalized" (Bista 1982). In other words, mountaineering as an ethnic vocation is an expression of a strengthened membership in the national community.

6.3.2 Labor Contract through Indeterminable, Monist, and Afno Manchhe Principles

I move on to practices of reaching labor contracts in Himalayan mountaineering by focusing on their characteristic features that engage in all three aspects of the Sherpa cosmic disposition. Aftno manchhe, as a widespread custom for Nepalis to secure temporary jobs related to mountain tourism, operates in trust and obligation formed between the members. Based upon these prefigured relationships, agency directors would put together a pool of candidates and select staff members best fit for the positions available.

Interpersonal connections outweigh rationalized formal practices: for example, while written contracts are documented mainly for the purpose of administrative affairs related to the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the real contract between SST and the workers is made verbally and can be different from the written contract. Canceling a contract may also be available through interpersonal dealings. While an

agency may cancel the contract for some reason, the hired ones may also want to freely choose not to work when, for example, a better position was later made available for them. Yet, both ways of canceling risk undermining personal relationships and sometimes do so seriously.

The open-closed chronology and the tantric monism are general principles operating when Makalu Sherpas come to conclude labor contracts. A contracting process is "open" or remains undetermined for long because the privilege for a determination is on external reality over abstract agreement. For example, no verbal or written promise can substitute the worker's actual appearing at the office and engaging in the labor for a signification of the appointment decision. If a Sherpa man least known to agency directors wants to get a job through the agency, he would consider doing some facilitating acts. These acts may include asking his friend to recommend himself, visiting the directors to introduce himself, coming by the office regularly, and taking part in some of the agency's routine chores. The last option—appearing at the office regularly and beginning to work even before signing the contract—is crucial and illustrates the monistic privilege of external reality. Mountaineering expeditions require preparation long before foreign client climbers arrive in Kathmandu. In the case of Mt. Everest expeditions in the spring season of 2013, where foreign climbers entered the country around the last week of March through the first week of April, a dozen Sherpa men gathered at the yard of SST as early as on February 10th to check the tents in storage and get them dry. Most of them were Makalu Sherpa, their kin, or close friends. However, most of them engaged in the preparation works without actually knowing whether they



Figure 6-2. Sherpas preparing expeditions at Seven Summit Treks on February 10, 2013. Photo by the author.

would in the end participate in the very expedition they were preparing—in fact, expeditions were, too, far from being determined to launch, yet still in their stages of making. This further means that, if a Sherpa man in the village wants to join an expedition, he will have to venture the three-day journey to Kathmandu as early as in January and to procure a place to stay there, without having a clear idea about what he will do in the end. Twenty-one-year-old "Sanu Kancha" Pasang, for example, was able to work as a member of kitchen staff at Camp Two of Mt. Everest in the spring of 2013. He narrated to me about Sherpa climbing, saying, "The works of climbing Sherpa are tough, but the payment is good. In the kitchen, there are very many works—digging up and carrying ice, melting it into water, cooking noodle, and boiling tea and hot water. But the

payment is small." "When," I asked, "would you be able to work as a climbing Sherpa?" "*Khai*!" he spat out an exclamation, fatalistically smiling. The decision is far from being in his hands, and my question was not a kind to which he could give an answer. Hearing this, another Pasang, one of the directors of SST, said to him, "At the spring of the next year, you might be able to work [as a climbing Sherpa]" (July 21, 2013).

Practical application of this undetermined and monistic custom of making contract revolves around a supervisory relationship that ties a variety of job positions with a closed circle of afno manchhe by principles of trust and obligation. Thus, the undetermined nature of the labor appointment customs does not actually ferry real risks of employment instability in most cases. An example for this took place at Namche, the central town of Khumbu, on the second day of marching toward Base Camp of Mt. Everest at the 2012 Korea Everest Peace Expedition. Korean members asked the team guide to fire Lhakpa, a twenty-one-year-old Walung Sherpa, who was a kitchen helper for the expedition. The Koreans considered his demeanor disturbingly slovenly: they accused him of not working hard, seeming surly, acting discourteous, and so on. They instead asked for the position to hire Chhongba Sherpa, a lowland porter in his thirties from Solu (a couple of days' walk to the south of Khumbu). Koreans viewed Chhongba as energetic, hard-working, and cheerful. Because he was appointed to join another team a few weeks later, he was working just as a porter carrying luggage up until their arrival at Base Camp. Accepting the request, the team guide Ang Temba (Nurbuchaaur, Walung), put Lhakpa, instead of fully firing him, into the kitchen of a Polish group, which was also heading to Mt. Everest and under the contract with SST like the Korean

group. Lhakpa worked in the kitchen throughout the whole expedition, while Chhongba was, before his scheduled leaving, appointed to working at the Korean team's kitchen. Upon a phone call from SST of Kathmandu, Lhakpa walked from Walung to Lukla (where the expedition starts to march to Mt. Everest) for seven days to join the expedition. In charge of the personnel affairs, Ang Temba obligatorily kept the employment for Lhakpa.

At the center of the afno manchhe supervisory relationships is the principle of proximity in Sherpa kinship. Ang Temba was the brother-in-law (makpa) of the SST directors-brothers. He had been participating as a team guide in a number of mountaineering expeditions and trekking groups organized by SST in recent years. Team guide (commonly referred as "sirdar" or "guide") is the most powerful position in the field among all workers hired by a Kathmandu-based agency. The team guide is supposed to negotiate with all Nepalis, inside and outside of the team, as well as take charge of communicating with clients. In Nepal, where the levels of infrastructure facilities and administrative rationality are generally low, exchange of favors and good personal connections are valued highly (Subedi 2014). These are required skills and preferred virtues for successful team guides. I suggested to twenty-one-year-old Lhakpa (a younger brother of Tendi of Nishar; not the Lhakpa above) to work as a team guide for a smaller expedition (2013 Amphu I expedition) in which I was appointed as a climbing member with two more Koreans. Apparently delighted with the suggestion of the powerful and high-paying position, Lhakpa assured me, saying, "I can do it; I know people there [Khumbu]" (August 17, 2013).

Most importantly, a team guide makes important decisions on many practical matters of expedition, including financial affairs such as hiring local porters, purchasing food items, paying room charges, or lending money to his non-Nepali clients who occasionally mistake Nepal as simply cheap. During the Mt. Everest expeditions in 2012 and 2013, team guides spent several thousand dollars in the field. When running out of cash, they may need to borrow a considerable amount of money from lodge owners who are also in close connections with the team guides or the agency directors in Kathmandu. Returning back to the capital at the end of the journey, the guides report the accounting details with receipts to the agency accountant. The receipts, especially those high-priced ones from lodges, will be reported to the government to calculate incomes and taxes at the end of each fiscal year. In all this, trust towards the team guide from the director is all the more significant as far as all expeditions involve a variety of expenses without issuing officially accountable receipts, such as tips, on-the-spot wages to local porters, food and equipment purchases, and the like. As a representative of the forthcoming expedition for Amphu I, I asked Mingma to consider Lhakpa's (Tendi's brother) appointment for the position. However, Ang Temba was again appointed in the end. Lhakpa's alleged personal connection and interpersonal skills were perhaps unable to substitute for the Ang Temba's trust secured via the kin relation.

In this collective and undetermined approach to mountaineering labor appointment, a Sherpa's individual preference seems lacking any footing. Ngaa Tenji Sherpa, who climbed the top of Mt. Everest seven times, expressed the inability of articulating his conflicting motives of mountaineering, saying, "Often I wanted to climb

another mountain, but I came here (Mt. Everest) again and again" (Personal conversation, May 22, 2013). There might be several reasons. He possibly chose to do so almost unwittingly because of the incomparable prestige attached to summiting Mt. Everest. Sherpa directors of the agency might have urged him to do so acknowledging his previous experiences with Korean mountaineers. In any case, it is true that the Himalayan veteran Sherpa gathered outstanding experiences on the highest mountain without envisioning it beforehand. No one was likely to have actively intended his expedition participation. This passive decision of expedition participation develops in between preformed social relationships and the shared privilege of concrete actions over abstract ideas.

In sum, Himalayan mountaineering is considered Sherpa's ethnic vocation by Sherpas themselves and fellow Nepalis in accordance to the nationwide ideology and practice of caste. Trust and obligation are paired principles that keep the afno mancche circle for Sherpas to hire and be hired in Himalayan mountaineering. The tantric monist approach of concluding a labor contract may by continued through the open-closed chronology, so that a Sherpa may climb Himalayan mountain without having a clear motivation in his mind. This general appreciation revolving on ethnic identity and ethnic characteristics may operate as a kind of buffer that keeps strengthening its membership held by Sherpa individuals against global influences.

6.4 Sherpas' Practices and Understanding of Economic Relationships in Himalayan Mountaineering

For Walung and Makalu Sherpas, economic interest is the most easily perceptible concern when it comes to participation in Himalayan mountaineering. This section delineates the ways in which the economic interest is actualized through stratified wage systems and practiced in a variety of terms respectively to each employment type. In doing so, operations of the threefold cosmic disposition will become notable as manifested in the styles of the practices.

6.4.1 Socially Oriented Economic Interest of Nepali Participation in Mountaineering

At the bottom, the tourism industry in Nepal provides one of the most significant sources of income for individual households and of revenue for the state government. There is no doubt that the economic interest plays a crucial role for individual Sherpas and other hired Nepalis to join mountaineering expeditions and other mountain tourist activities. There is considerable variation in employees' wages. The inequality in the income for Walung and Makalu Sherpas' participations in Himalayan mountaineering results from two preexisting conditions. For one, the industry structure is hierarchically stratified, and "corruption" as a general phenomenon in the country is associated with the structure. For another, Sherpa individualism helps the society endure with the lack of class consciousness. Toffin observes an overall lack of class consciousness across ethnic boundaries in Nepal (Toffin 2013). My observation of the industry agrees with his finding and presents a case in which economic appropriation does not lead to the

formation of class identity inside an ethnic group. In the following discussion of the Himalayan mountaineering wage practices, I examine the two conditions and suggest that the manner of social relations administers economic orientations.

While, as I noted earlier, Sherpas have monopolized the Himalayan mountaineering industry throughout the past hundred years, the style of monopoly has been changing. Today, what I call "agency expedition" is the major organizational style for Himalayan mountaineering expeditions. Expeditions began to be launched in the style in the middle of 1980s when "classic expedition" had been the major style. An expedition of the classic style is firstly planned, designed, and organized by mountaineers and secondly connected to an agency, which may be based in either Nepal, their own country, or both, for the sake of further management of bureaucratic, institutional, and other non-mountaineering matters. The agency expedition is that an agency, or a collection of agencies, organizes an expedition by collecting clients and forming groups on its own. The agency expedition has been frequently referred to by Western mountaineers as "commercial expeditions" with an air of disparagement (§3.3); however, the designation is problematic as long as both styles must be tied to commercial relations, such as sponsorship, employment, and agency involvement. More importantly, classic expedition of today is increasingly taking after the organizational format of the agency expedition leaving nothing but the nominal leadership in the hands of the members, while most practical matters beyond climbing decisions are taken by Sherpa managers and guides. The cause of this transformation is complicated because of the global nature of the sport. On the one hand, clients' participation in Himalayan mountaineering has increasingly

been individualized. Also, the number of non-Western clients is increasing. On the other hand, at the center of this transformation, Sherpas find the better niche in the economy of Himalayan mountaineering. What follows is the rise of Sherpa-centered agency expedition.

Mt. Everest climbing is at the front of this transformation. In the past few years, it has displayed the most liberalized style in several ways with a high concentration of agency expeditions. In 2012 and 2013, around thirty agencies were actively organizing agency expeditions on most of popular Himalayan peaks, not only in Nepal but also in China, India, and Pakistan, including eight-thousand-meter peaks (Mt. Everest, K2, Lhotse, Annapurna I, Cho Oyu, Sishapangma, Nanga Parbat, Manaslu, and Dhaulagiri I, to name the most popular ones) and other lower peaks (Ama Dablam [6,812m/22,349ft], Imja Tse [Island Peak, 6,189m/20,305ft], Lobuche East [6,119m/20,075ft], Himlung Himal (7,126m), Mera Peak [6,476m/21,247ft], and Baruntse [7,162m/23,497ft], among others). In the spring season of 2013 in the Nepal side of Mt. Everest, more than twenty agencies provided services to 315 foreign climbers in total, including, according to the commentator Alan Arnette, Asian Trekking (26 foreign client climbers/0 foreign guides), IMG (33+/4+), Alpine Ascents Int. (16/4), HiMex (12/2), Adventure Consultants (10/4), Jagged Globe (10/3), and Peak Freaks (8/3), among others (Arnette 2013).[130] Note that these numbers do not display whether each climber is a member of either a classic expedition or an agency expedition. This commentator was likely unable to collect the

[130] SST was the third (or the fourth) largest group in the spring of 2012 at the Nepal side of Mt. Everest, accommodating around thirty foreign client climbers.

information of SST—the outstandingly biggest group in the season, which included no Western guide or organizer. In that season on the mountain, SST served for seventy two foreign climbers, among whom around fifty were of the classic style (in five teams) and the rest could be categorized as an agency expedition, in which the individual climbers shared one huge community tent at Base Camp and loosely formed a single group. In this case, the Sherpa-client relationship is tightened more than that in the classic style in general.

What follows this trend of upsurge of agency expedition is an increasing and patterned institutional gap between individual Sherpa climbers and foreign climbers. It is realized by the intervention of the agency's diversified roles, such as the role of "Base Camp manager," the increasing significance of the team guide's role, and the agency's high leverage of expedition management. Clients would generally have a sense of wages that should be made to the expedition's employees by referring to the invoice that the agency provided to them beforehand. In a number of cases, however, the invoiced salaries have rarely been paid as stated. What is written, including salary, often very differs from the actual amount paid. These items include local employee wages, transportation, accommodations, equipment, the permissions, and therefore the service charge.

Here, I theorize the manner of cosmic disposition's persistence. The convention of allowing and not rationalizing discrepancies between *de jure* payments and *de facto* payments is preserved by keeping the agency expedition as a successful Sherpa-exclusive economic institution. The convention reflects the indeterminable, monist, and afno

mancche characteristics manifested in Sherpas' practices of concluding labor contracts. These dispositional characteristics are further obvious in the multi-institutional field such as the multifaceted market of Mt. Everest climbing. A major expedition agency, for example, may possibly expect an exponential profit increase by applying the characteristic interpersonal relationship on the ground of the Sherpa-centered market. During the spring season of 2013 on Mt. Everest, one Sherpa told me about the practice of refilling used oxygen canisters. He said,

> If you take a discarded empty oxygen bottle and bring it to [a manager] at Base Camp, he will pay you 1,000 rupees [$12] per bottle. However, there are other businessmen, too, and if you bring it to them, they will pay you 5,000, 7,000 or even 8,000 rupees. Of course, if [the manager] comes to see you're doing so, he will be angry … After the tank gets refilled, it will be sold at the market in $350 per bottle. If you have a lot of money, you may collect 100-150 empty bottles, as you can buy each for $150-160 at the end. If the bottle is new, you can sell it for $400. So if you are going to launch a big team, let me know. Send me money first, then I will gather the bottles and refill them. [The agency director] pays the money to collect the bottles. [The Base Camp manger] collect and refills them. They are like partners. Organizers of other big teams do the same thing. (Personal conversation, May 2013)

This kind of seemingly corruptive practices in Himalayan mountaineering is passed under the unspoken rule of the Sherpas' indeterminable, monist, and afno manchhe characteristics shared by climbing Sherpas, team guides, Base Camp managers, and expedition agency directors. For the sake of economic profit, they must keep those behaviors secret to client climbers and non-Sherpa Nepalis. That is to say, the Sherpas' particular characteristics endure in the advantage of capitalistic economic principles, not that the economic relationships brought about such clandestine or "corruptive" practices.

By the same token, the apparent individuality in the acts of the market participants should be seen as a re-actualization of their longstanding characteristics.

6.4.2 Climbing Sherpa Wage System in Himalayan Mountaineering

This subsection details the wage system of the climbing Sherpa as practiced by Makalu Sherpas. The whole staff of a Himalayan mountaineering expedition—that is, an expedition's total participants minus clients—normally comprises a number of positions including, in the Sherpa conventional terminology, team guide (or sirdar), climbing Sherpa (or climbing guide), cook (Base Camp cook and Camp Two cook, if applicable), kitchen helper (or kitchen boy), and porter (or lowland porter). In exceptional cases, there are also Base Camp manager and trekking guide (or trekking Sherpa). A hired climbing Sherpa may earn wages through a number of categories including equipment fee, daily wages, carry bonus, summit bonus, and member tip.

One of the general characters in the wage system is, again, the normalized discrepancy between *de jure* and *de facto* wage. Except locally hired laborers such as lowland porters or yak herders, the staff would be paid after the expedition was over. The amounts of actual wages are rarely determined or announced to the employees prior to the end of an expedition. The payment may also be delayed, if given at all, for several months to years. It might be cut down; in some cases the cut was half of the initial promise. Employed Sherpas seldom directly ask for the full payment from the directors though, and from behind employees may complain and sometimes blame the employers for being greedy as "caring only about money." This ambivalence in the perception of the

employee-employer relationship rarely exists in the case of employment of subsidiary (local) laborers. Their wages must be paid right after the appointed labors were completed because the afno manchhe connection with them is not standardized. If, however, close Sherpas are hired for lowland porters alongside other non-Sherpa Nepalis, they are possibly ill-paid while others are paid as supposed.

To give a general idea, by participating in a Mt. Everest expedition, a climbing Sherpa may expect to earn from $2,000 to $7,000 in total. The considerable difference in this range of wage are explained by a number of reasons in a moment. This payment is obviously higher than an ordinary Nepali laborer may expect. For a comparison, the four office staff members of SST are monthly paid from 9,000 ($110) to 14,000 ($180) rupees.[131] This may not be the average, though, as one of the staff complained and said, "The standard wage is 25,000 rupees. The moderate level is between 14,000 and 25,000 rupees. Below 14,000 rupees is considered low, although there are people who make only 4-5,000 rupees per month" (Personal conversation, July 24, 2013).

6.4.2.1 Equipment Fee

The equipment fee originates in the contracts made between the early British Everest expeditioners and the hired Sherpas in the 1920s, where the Europeans provided Sherpas with sets of clothing and gear sufficient for climbing high on the mountain. Later on, as some Sherpas could use their own or other's boots and clothes, the provision was in general substituted with a lump-sum monetary compensation, thus called "equipment

[131] 1 US dollar was equivalent to 80 to 105 Nepali rupees throughout 2012 and 2013.

fee." The equipment fee for Mt. Everest at SST was officially $1,500 in 2012. The amounts always varied. The smallest equipment fee in Mt. Everest expeditions I knew of was $800.

SST has applied this category of wage for real purchases made by each Sherpa to obtain expensive equipment, such as mountaineering boots, crampons, waterproof jackets, and down suits, all available at prices with a ten-percent discount through Yak Mountain Gear. This company is an authorized dealer of the Western companies Black Diamond and La Sportiva as well as a producer and seller of its own clothing products at cheaper prices. The company is managed by Tashi, a younger brother of Mingma and one of the four directors of SST. Its shop and office are located in Akasidhara.

6.4.2.2 Daily Wage

The daily wage for a climbing Sherpa also varied and was, in the cases of SST expeditions in 2012 and 2013, from 500 ($6) to 800 ($10) rupees per day. The working days are calculated as the days between departing from and arriving at Kathmandu. Mt. Everest expedition usually takes fifty days to two months.

The system of daily wage is also implemented in accordance to the characteristic afno manchhe principle. The climbing Sherpa's daily wage might seem lower than lowland porters whose wage has been from 800 to 1,500 and sometimes up to 2,000 rupees per "camp" (usually equivalent to or a little shorter than a day's walk), depending on the local labor supply. However, the expedition does not provide ration to the local porters, and thus, during the consecutive days of portering—eight to ten days to Everest

Base Camp—they would need to spend from 300 to 600 or up to 1,000 rupees per day for two meals, cups of tea, and other snacks as they wish, even though they would pay at cheaper, non-tourist local prices. In other words, the wage structure is divided into two sides regarding proximity to the agency: one that directly contracts the agency, including climbing Sherpas and kitchen staff, and the other that indirectly contracts (subcontract) with the agency, including local porters.[132] Though customarily ill-paid, laborers of the former side could be better insured with semi-permanent job opportunities than those of the latter. For example, in order to avoid hassles and unexpected delays involved in lowland portering, SST directors tended to devise new efficient methods such as carrying freights by helicopters from the ends of the local road to Base Camp of respective mountains (e.g. at the Makalu expedition in the spring of 2013, all luggage was uncustomarily helicoptered to Base Camp from Num, the village at the end of the road, skipping the eight-day caravan). They even purchased in 2014 one of the fifteen helicopters in the country for better transportations throughout expeditions, expeditious rescue missions, trekking clients' fast returning to Kathmandu and so on. In fact, almost every clear day invites a number of helicopters to Base Camp for transporting goods, clients, injured climbers, VIPs, dead bodies, and others to Lukla (an airport town) or to Kathmandu.

[132] Dixit argued that the lowland porters were at the weakest position amid the unstable and appropriative industry. He noted, "Those who tend to lose out in a cheap and ill-organised climb are not even the sahebs, but the lowland porters. For it is they who take up the slack by having to carry more loads, sometimes even to high camps. While some trek agencies provide adequate clothing, Chinese basketball shoes, and even cheap dark glasses, the majority go up the mountain unprotected and innocent of the dangers" (Dixit and Risal 1992:15).

6.4.2.3 Carry Bonus

Carry bonus refers to the summed-up compensation for every carriage of load between camps. As of the spring season of 2012, the carry bonuses paid to the SST workers for carrying one *bari* (a unit of load weighing 12kg) on Mt. Everest were $25 from Base Camp to Camp One, $45 from Camp One to Camp Two, $70 from Camp Three to Camp Four, and $120 from Camp Two to Camp Four. Also, like in lowland portering, "double bari" is ordinarily available on the mountain to those who are willing to carry 24kg and be paid double. The rate of compensation greatly varies between agencies ($500 from Base Camp to Camp Four as the most and $80 from Camp Two to Camp Four as the least, as far as I know), and SST's is considered less than average, raising concealed complaints from experienced Sherpas. One of the team guides of SST Mt. Everest expeditions in 2013 criticized the exploitation and reasoned that "[SST directors and employees] came from the same village" (Personal conversation, May 22, 2013).

The other side of this seemingly exploitative practice constitutes what I call "subsequent deception." One Sherpa recalled, "[the sirdar] used to keep record of 15kg into a double bari carry, so that Sherpas were pleased. Assuming this, though, [the Sherpa director] cut out the payment a little" (Personal conversation, August 23, 2013). A dual understanding is manifested through the labor-wage conversion practice: the rationalized, verbalized, and numericized domain, on the one hand, and, on the other, the unspoken, assumed, and interpersonal domain. "Corruption" plays not just upon the hands of figures of power, but, as one officer of SST blasted, "corruption is everywhere." The immoral

sense of the term is perhaps less induced from actual contexts and yet more utilized for group politics, as neither the Sherpa accuser above nor the sirdar considered the director's unfair treatment too unethical and thus unbearable.

Total carry bonus, and thereby total earning, varies considerably depending on the times they are willing to climb up and down. The team guide keeps a record of this varying attainment of each Sherpa. Since this category is not exclusively applicable to climbing Sherpas, others such as kitchen staff members (especially at Camp Two) may want to make use of their free hours to carry loads to and from Camp Four. A potential conflict can develop between their duty in the kitchen and their spending time and energy for additional income, and such discord among the kitchen staff was not uncommon and raises conflicts between the workers.

This practice of carry bonus is by far the most sophisticated and generalized in Mt. Everest's spring expeditions. It is not so much a convention as a temporary application in the expeditions to other mountains or to Mt. Everest in the autumn season. It is hard to expect elsewhere to earn income as much as they could do in a spring-season expedition on this mountain. This economic potential provides one rationale why many Walung Sherpas prefer joining Mt. Everest expeditions in the spring season. A rudimentary form of this "liberal" system—payment made according to the laborer's performance rather than the appointment—has been applied at expeditions of other eight thousanders, such as that between Base Camp and Camp One on Makalu, for which a local boy might want to visit Base Camp of the mountain during climbing seasons out of



Figure 6-3. Counting loads of carriage on Camp Two of Mt. Everest. Sherpa climbers are preparing to start climbing while a team guide (at the center, sitting) is taking note of amount of loads each climber carries. May 3, 2013. Photo by the author.

an expectation of a job opportunity (Personal conversation with "Sanu Kancha" Pasang, August 28, 2013).

In the autumn season, as the temperature goes down and the wind blows more severe, Mt. Everest in recent years has invited fewer expeditions than before, compared to the spring season when more expeditions are launched. In the autumn of 2012, four expeditions were on the Mt. Everest massif (including Lhotse). Except a Korean team that climbed Lhotse South Face afar from the proper Mt. Everest, three teams were at Base Camp of Mt. Everest: one Japanese group aimed a solo climb through a variation route, and the other two—Korean and Polish—groups climbed the normal route. Twenty foreigners and six Sherpa climbers collaborated in fixing ropes and carrying loads. The

division of labor implemented in this case was far from being liberal. A climbing Sherpa had to carry a same amount of load under the leadership of the team guide instead of his individual preference. This non-liberal and collectivistic division of labor is customary in most expeditions in the Himalayas.

6.4.2.4 Summit Bonus

A summit bonus is given to a climbing Sherpa who topped the aimed peak with client climber(s). This category of wage is to be paid by either the agency, the expedition (client climber), or both, depending on the nature of the contract. The amount varies agency to agency, mountain to mountain. The official "agency" summit bonus of SST on Mt. Everest as of 2012 was $1,000 separate from the "member tips" (explained in a moment). The summit bonuses at expeditions on other over-eight-thousand-meter peaks are in general less than on Mt. Everest. For example, the agency summit bonus of Manaslu (8,156m/26,759ft) was officially $500 in an expedition in 2011. However, actual payment can be reduced from the official note, as one Sherpa in that expedition received $300 (Personal conversation, August 2, 2012).

Whether the summit bonus is made depends on clients' abilities, rather than Sherpas. Hence, assignment of clients to each Sherpa is a form of power relation. Climbing Sherpas accompany client climbers when they climb from the last camp to the top. Normally, accompanying client(s) before the summit attempt is not a required service for any hired Nepalis. In a highly-guided expedition, the team guide, after a few weeks of acclimatization climbing, would finally create pairings of client climbers and

climbing Sherpas. If the expedition is of a less guided nature, and thus the (client) team leader would decide logistics of the summit attempt, including movements of climbing Sherpas, the team guide might still suggest different combinations of member and Sherpa to the leader. Therefore, a Sherpa's reaching the top results not solely from their being physically fit for high-altitude climbing. No matter how bodily fit and mentally willing he was, no Sherpa would continue to the top alone if the paired client climber wished to turn back. Ngaa Tenji reached the top of Mt. Everest twice among the three expeditions he joined in 2012 and 2013. He was able to do so not merely because he was fit for the climb, but more importantly because he was paired with client climbers who reached the top in the end. Both pairings were under his decision in his capacity of being the team guide. Two other Sherpas on Mt. Everest in the 2012 expedition had to turn back on the midway to the top as their client climbers turned back.

6.4.2.5 Tips

The client climbers are expected to pay a gratuity to each hired Nepali. Tourist guides and porters in Nepal have anticipated and relied on tips as a substantial source of income in addition to daily wages (Gurung, Simmons and Devlin 1996:118). Tipping has long been customary among the countrymen, especially in the hilly and mountainous regions where long-distance load carrying is inevitable. Although the to-be-tipped laborers might say, as they do so if asked about how much tips they expect, "Give as you wish," there is an unspoken rule shared for tipping in mountain tourism and local portering. The amount of tips normally approximates ten to thirty percent of the sum of

daily wages. A day's wage is indeed an easy way of calculation, and it is common to tip for a few days' of portering in Nepal.

Whether local lowland porters are to be tipped by the (foreign) team leader or by the (Nepali) team guide depends on the style of expedition, more or less akin to the division between classic expedition and agency expedition. If an expedition is of a "packaged" nature and thus clients would be little concerned with logistics before arriving at Base Camp, logistics such as hiring porters, choosing hotels for each night, and distributing and checking bags of cargo, it would be in general the team guide who takes in charge of tipping the lowland porters. In this way, the client members would care little about the subcontract with the locals outside the afno manchhe circle of the Sherpas. All three Korean Mt. Everest expeditions in 2012 and 2013 were of the packaged mountain tourism, exhibiting a sub-sub-subcontract (i.e. Korean mountaineers contracted with a Korean agency, which contracted with a Nepali agency, which hired a team guide, who hired local porters). The packaged nature does not count the eurocentric quality of climb such as guided climbing or impressive feats (like the 2013 Korean Everest expedition where two of the members climbed without using oxygen). In this packaged style of expedition, members would not need to keep their march toward Base Camp in the same itinerary with porters, thus rendering some of expedition vocabularies such as "march" or "caravan" archaic, nor do they count the number of bags arrived at the hotel each evening. What follows from this packaged system is that they are allowed more time and freedom with which they may be concerned more with what they are supposed to do beyond Base Camp. They spend the dozen days of walking to the mountain for

conditioning their bodies to be real "pilgrims of the vertical" (Taylor 2010) without hassling over calculating lodge fees, negotiating tips, exchanging greetings and farewells, inquiring for a bag yet to come and so on.

To the staff members, the team leader is responsible for tipping including the team guide, climbing Sherpas, cooks, kitchen helpers, and sometimes non-local lowland porters (who accompany the whole expedition). For a comparison, the Table 6-1 catalogs the amount of tips that were made to each employee in five research expeditions. The expeditions are selected here because of their diverse characteristics, being 1) guided Everest climb, 2) without-oxygen Everest climb, 3) alpine-style first ascent, 4) Korean-guided climb, and 5) alpine-style multi-peak ascent. From the Nepalis' point of view, amount of the tip depends on the members' nationality rather than their evaluation of the services received. This may be one of the reasons why the Sherpas rarely make efforts to manipulate or compel a client into relinquishing a bigger tip. The more important reason for this lack of manipulation can be attributed to the pan-South Asian custom of philanthropic donations—referred to as "*dan*" derived from "donation"—where donors impulsively give gifts to recipients who have no rights (Bornstein 2012:56-7). In this custom, the recipients are considered generous because they provide opportunity for donors to act meritoriously. Therefore, a bigger tip expresses a better relationship between the tipper and the tipped. For example, some Makalu Sherpas imagine Chinese mountaineers "good" because they are used to tip a greater amount. A Walung Sherpa received $2,500 for the member tip from a Chinese middle-aged female mountaineer, even though they did not continue to climb beyond the last camp on Mt. Everest in the

Table 6-1.The amount of tips paid to each hired Nepali in some of the research expeditions.

	Days (members out. KTM)	Members (visitors)	Team Guide	Climbing Guide		Cook (2nd-cook)	Kitchen Helper	Non-local Lowland Porter
				Summit	No summit			
Korean Everest-Lhotse Expedition, 2013	54	6 (+5)	N.A.	$1,000 (3)	$1,000 (1)	$500 (1) / $300 (1)	$200 (4)	N.A.
CALSAC SNU Everest Expedition, 2012	51	3 (+14)	N.A.	$1,200 (1)	$600 (3)	$300 (1) / $200 (1)	$100 (1)	N.A.
AOK Korea Amphu 1 Expedition, 2013	37	4	$300 (1)	N.A.	N.A.	$200 (1)	$100 (3)	$100 (3)
Himalayan Mountaineering Course at Kolon Alpine School, 2013	13	13	0 (1) / $300 (1)	$250 (1) / $200 (1) / $150 (3)	N.A.	$150 (1) / $100 (1)	$50 (7)	$30 (6)
Langtang Wanderers, 2014	20	2	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	NPR 10,000 (1)

spring of 2013. According to the Sherpa, the big tip she gave him showed how "good" (N. *namro*) she was. They prefer joining Chinese expeditions to other nationals, coveting not only the bigger payment but more importantly the better relationship.

I also argue that the longstanding social, ontological, and intentional dispositions which are articulated in the form of the Sherpa-exclusive organization in Himalayan mountaineering suppresses a blunt expression of individualism in the custom of tipping. Greta Foff Paules (1991) emphasizes that one should take into account the broader organizational context in which the tipping relationship takes place. By observing a group of waitresses in a family-style restaurant in New Jersey, she articulates how what she calls "waitress's code of noninterference" becomes a normalized convention.



Figure 6-4. Internal hierarchy in expedition staff. While Sherpas almost monopolized load carrying positions, low-paying, hard, and non-masculine kitchen staff positions are for non-Sherpa Nepalis. Two Bhotes are working at the kitchen of Camp Two on Mt. Everest. May 5, 2013. Photo by the author.

"Aggressive individualism," she argues, "is fostered by the structure of the waitress's job … by supply shortages … and by the demarcation of the restaurant floor into stations" (Paules 1991:174-5). This American individualism is hardly implemented in the organizational structure of Himalayan mountaineering industry. Due to the socially intertwined characteristic of the industry, a tip once given is not entirely owned by the respective recipient. The ownership of the tip is considered in degree and is changing. Defrauding part of the tip is a convention. For example, due to the conventional hurry after the summit climb or to having no big money on the spot, foreign mountaineers, arriving quickly at Kathmandu, often give the tips not directly to respective individuals who are still managing the retrieval from Base Camp, but to the agency director in the

capital. It seems customary that directors subtract a portion of the tips and deliver the rest to respective laborers later. Similarly, if the client members ask the team guide to deliver tips to individuals, it is also likely that he would bilk portions of them. In one case, the initial tip of $900 decreased to $600 via a team guide. Therefore, climbing Sherpas and kitchen staff members prefer the direct tipping. Yet, they rarely ask client members to tip in this way since tipping, in their minds, should be given "as you wish." One experienced Korean mountaineer, in the course of his fourteen-peak project, began to tip directly to each of the hired Nepalis in 2012. "He understood," one Walung Sherpa simply put it (Personal conversation, January 12, 2013).

In sum, economic orientation for Sherpas' expedition participation relies on the manner of social relationships. Though the afno mancche organization embeds lopsided power relationships and induces concealed complaints, it seems successful and thriving in the global context of the industry. Foreign mountaineers especially on Mt. Everest are increasingly diverse and individualistic. The Sherpa-centered agency expedition better fits in this new trend across the Himalayas than the classic expedition where foreign mountaineers assume the more significant leverage than hired Sherpas. This macroscopic transformation goes in tandem with microscopic patterns of economic relationships. Makalu Sherpa mountaineers implement multiple categories of wage structure, including equipment fee, daily wages, carry bonus, summit bonus, and tip.

Mt. Everest, the most global and diverse venue of Himalayan mountaineering, is now climbed exhibiting an unprecedented liberal style of Sherpa labor participation. Even so, this liberalism in Himalayan mountaineering economy is put in place by virtue of the

Sherpa-centered, indeterminable (intentional), monist (ontological), and afno manchhe (social) organizational style.

6.5 Sherpas' Evaluation of Mountaineering Experiences

This section examines a few notable patterns in which Walung and Makalu Sherpas evaluate mountaineering experiences. This description considers some of the most noticeable and distinctive features of Sherpa mountaineering experience. I focus on two features: masculine valuation and individualist collectivism. For one, mountaineering for the Sherpas is basically a game of physical strength. I do not argue mountaineering is exclusively a male occupation; there are a small number of female Sherpa mountaineers, though I have never encountered one during my expedition participations. No female Walung Sherpa is or was a mountaineer. I merely suggest that the Sherpa masculinity is well displayed through their mountaineering participation. For another, mountaineering is evaluated by Sherpas with its social quality. I do not engage here in a technical or philosophical discussion of individualism; I merely wish to characterize the socially driven Sherpas' valuation of the sport. Since I do not attempt here a historical understanding of these two features, the following characterization might seem essentializing. To the contrary, however, the characterization will never claim a deterministic view on individual Sherpas' behaviors; instead, my identification provides a basic and general pattern on which behavioral diversity revolves.

6.5.1 Mountaineering as a Physical Game to Reach the Top

For Walung and Makalu Sherpas, the goal of Himalayan mountaineering is to reach the top. Mountaineers, they imagine, want to achieve the goal because they anticipate fame and money. Being physically strong is therefore a fundamental requirement and positive quality as understood by the Sherpas.

No ethical judgment seems attached to the notion of climbing for money and fame. A number of Sherpas asked me how much income I and my Korean colleagues would earn from the sponsors and how famous we would become after successful expeditions. Fame and money are two conspicuous values Sherpas readily attribute to Himalayan mountaineering as Fisher (1990:129) observed. "The mountain makes us famous," said Mingma (Personal conversation, May 12, 2013), himself famous as a mountaineer with his exceptional achievement.

"Being strong" (WS. *gyanok*, meaning "it is strong," or *bale chhungsung*, "strength is enough") is highly valued among Sherpas. When it comes to mountaineering, Walung Sherpas consider, more than anything else, being physically strong both a requirement for the position and a source of collective self-esteem. In a word, strength is their identity vis-à-vis the sport. In village contexts, being physically strong is unequivocally valued in reference to hard labors and the harsh environment. Drawing from this indigenous perspective of masculine characteristics, Makalu Sherpas understand mountaineering basically as a set of physical activities. For them, mountaineering is essentially physically challenging (N. *ghaaro*) as the village chores are. By the same token, there may be cases where mountain climbing is felt less hard than

normally anticipated. Therefore, experienced Sherpas might argue with one another over a general difficulty of climbing of a particular mountain. In such a case, a Sherpa having previous experience on the mountain would justify his evaluation by giving detailed descriptions about circumstances of the climb such as a possibility of collaboration with other teams, the general incline of the route, measures of typical snowfall and wind speed, and so on. In doing so, the particularities of mountaineering experiences are subsumed into a category of physical aptness and bodily strength among Walung Sherpas.

Indeed, the matters climbing guides are supposed to deal with in mountaineering expeditions comprise a variety of physical labors. Also, the expedition chores spread well beyond events of climbing, over several months, and across various locations. The spring season's expeditions require a collective preparation as early as February to check tents, oxygen canisters, and other equipment. In order to occupy better spots in the crowded Everest Base Camp, a couple of Sherpas might need to depart as early as in early March when the wintry conditions still linger on the mountainous area, about two weeks before the foreign mountaineers arrive in Nepal. As the foreigners arrive and the team guide accompanies them, other appointed Sherpas need to go ahead of the client climbers with tons of packaged equipment and foodstuffs to make sure the dozens of bags and storage drums are not lost in the midst of hassles during air, road, and trail transportations. As the Sherpas arrive on the glacier, several days before the arrival of the clients, they dig up the iced ground and pile on rocks to pitch dozens of tents—member tents (per person), Sherpa tents (per two persons or three), member and Sherpa dining tents, equipment

tents, kitchens, toilets, shower tents, bar, bakery, and so on. A helipad ground may also be leveled. At the selected "best" spot, finally, they level the ground and pile up the puja stupa and altar. As the expedition progresses, the ground at Base Camp melts down (in spring season) and reconstructions of the camp are occasionally necessitated.

Climbing Sherpas' main activity is to carry loads between camps and is considered physically challenging by the Sherpas. While a few selected climbing Sherpas climb to fix the rope on the route before everyone else, most Sherpas climb ahead of the members in order to set up tents and store food, fuel, and other necessaries. The enervation and growing bodily fatigue for the Sherpas are in a sense similar to the way in which client climbers feel during their acclimatization climbing. Ideally, the client climbers will acclimatize three times before the final summit bid in the case of Mt. Everest climb, firstly up to Camp One and back to Base Camp, secondly up to Camp Two and back to Base Camp, and thirdly up to Camp Three and back to Base Camp. In between the climbs they rest at Base Camp for a few days. For the last rest (before the final summit attempt), some foreign mountaineers hike for one or two days down to Periche (4,370m/14,340ft) or Deboche (3,820m/12,530ft) taking three to five days of rest in thicker air. In exceptional cases, some helicopter to Kathmandu (which takes an hour) to take a best rest. During this pre-summit climb of around one month, climbing Sherpas sometimes climb with clients mainly because of favorable weather conditions.

At the final push—on Mt. Everest, taking around five days normally between May 10th and 25th—the Sherpas, at last, act as "guides," accompanying the clients from Camp Two or Three. On this round, too, Sherpas carry loads, such as sleeping bags, food,

cooking sets, and oxygen canisters.[133] Climbing Sherpas and client climbers stay the night together as they set up the camp on sight, and in the evening or early the next morning they set out the round trip to the top. On Mt. Everest, the time taken for the trip varies from around fourteen hours (at the 2012 spring expedition) to twenty six hours (at the 2013 expedition). Eventually, a climbing Sherpa climbs along with his member partner, carrying additional oxygen canisters and keeping eye on everything that could possibly occur to the now exhausted client.

When retreating from the mountain top, Sherpas need to bring everything down from the mountain. If not, "other teams will," Mingma, the director of SST, told me, "take a picture [of the remains] and [the agency] will have a big problem" (August 27, 2012). It must be hard for the Tibetan highlanders, after forty-some hours of continuously carrying loads to such a high place, to carry around forty pounds and look after the sluggish member at the same time. Hence, the tired Sherpas often part company with their members and come down earlier than the latter do, as the guides would consider the members safe now. But the members often feel differently, and this as well as many miscellaneous instances of miscommunication and clashes of ethnocentrism throughout the expedition can lead to complaints the directors of Kathmandu-based agency have to deal with later.

[133] In almost every Himalayan mountaineering events, in which mountaineers apply the siege tactics (progressing camps by traveling back and forth), Sherpas carry loads of food and sleeping bags for the last camp at the final push climbing, not stocking beforehand because of efficiency and the generally insecure condition of the highest camp.

This Makalu Sherpas' general identification of mountaineering as a game of physical strength is not identical to those of other Himalayan mountaineers including Sherpas from other regions. Khumbu Sherpa mountaineers, whose population on the mountains has been greater than Walung and Makalu Sherpas, seem to share a notion of mountain climbing to be technical. About one thousand Sherpas have enrolled in instruction provided by Khumbu Climbing Center, founded in 2003 by the Alex Low Charitable Foundation (Wilkinson 2012). In 2009, Dawa Sangge, with another Walung Sherpa, passed the interview to enroll in the Basic Mountaineering Course organized by Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA). There, he learned a variety of mountaineering skills and techniques that he had rarely heard about from other Walung Sherpas, such as managing the oxygen set-up and the gamow bag (a medical kit for acute mountain sickness), techniques of fixing the rope, skills of climbing rock, ice, and glacier, and many others. He said, "Solukhumbu Sherpas had a lot of interest in them. There were no Makalu Sherpas except two of us. Makalu Sherpas have interest only in chhang; we are just strong" (Personal conversation, January 22, 2013). It is amid this wave of technical interest that three young Rolwaling Sherpas—two of whom were holders of mountain guide licenses—ventured the first ascent of three unclimbed peaks in northeastern Nepal, becoming the first all-Sherpa team completing first ascents of unclimbed peaks in Nepal (Nepal National Mountain Guide Association 2015). One of the climbers said, "We want to show that we are not just porters on the mountain, climbing only for our livelihood, but we are interested in climbing because we enjoy it, too" (Green 2015). I have never heard any Makalu Sherpa ever expressing this kind of

climbing motivation, though many Walung Sherpas recognize their practices of climbing as too non-technical, as well as uneducated, underdeveloped, and under-modernized, compared to other Sherpas, and therefore to be improved in the future.[134]

Though less technical, Makalu Sherpas value their own strength on the mountain because they not only rely on their traditional masculine ideal, but also witness such a physical quality being valued by foreign mountaineers. They evaluate foreign mountaineers in those terms based on what they observe instead of what the foreigners would say. Since Messner firstly completed climbing all fourteen over-eight-thousand-meter peaks in 1986, the replication of his feat became a popular fad as followed by an increasing number of nervy mountaineers. Figure 6-5 illustrates the numbers of the fourteen-peak summiteers by year. There are many more foreign mountaineers who climbed multiple peaks but not all fourteen.[135] They also hire Sherpas to procure assistance and secure safety. In so doing, the ideal ethic of climbing "for its own sake" evades Makalu Sherpas' understanding. Nor is the Korean climbing ethic of evaluating climbing process and meditating the past experience appreciated by them. Ngaa Tenji told me, "many [client] people ended up turning around South Summit without reaching the top (which would take one to three more hours), taking photos there to get the [summit] certification later" (Personal conversation, May 22, 2013). He also reported that

[134] Mingma expressed a similar opinion, saying, "Although Makalu Sherpas are strong, they need to be more technical" (Personal conversation, January 13, 2013).

[135] In 2012 and 2013, a number of the foreign mountaineers climbing on eight thousanders except for Mt. Everest had already summited one or more giant peaks. Though this does not mean that they were to continue the course of climbing all fourteen peaks, they often introduce themselves to other foreign mountaineers by counting the peaks—the eight thousanders—they climbed. However, certainly this is a new phenomenon in recent years and by no means typical on Mt. Everest, where foreign mountaineers constitute diverse people, from novices to fourteen-peak baggers and elite mountaineers.

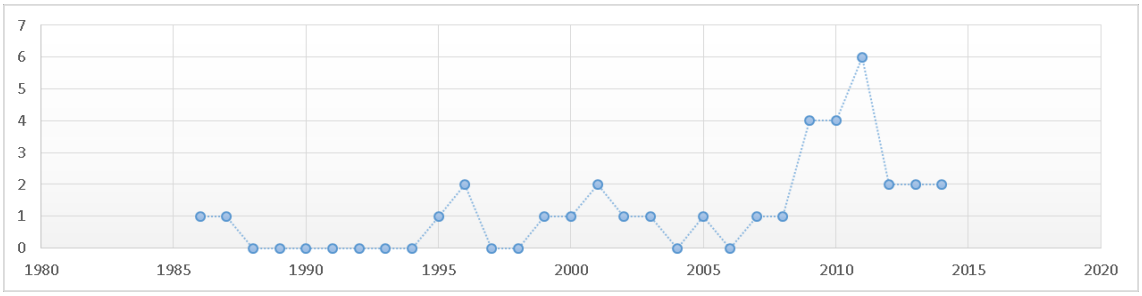


Figure 6-5. The number of climbers who completed climbing all fourteen over-eight-thousand-meter peaks by year. Compiled by Eberhard Jurgalski.

a few Western mountaineers on K2 in 2012, intending to climb officially without using oxygen, brought an "emergency" oxygen and used it during climbing.[136] In 2012, I climbed next to an expedition the aim of which would surely be referred to by Western mountaineering communities as a "real mountaineering," for no climber in the team planned to use the artificial oxygen. In the course of the expedition, however, their Sherpas reported me their using of steroids, which seems controversial for the elite standard of Western mountaineering. Therefore, Sherpas' understanding of Himalayan mountaineering as a physical game is neither a hollow claim nor an inappropriate view from a global perspective. It instead interprets the sport from a different epistemology. By convention, Westerners and Koreans divide the sport between idealism and reality. The Sherpas divide it between strong and not strong. As much as the "reality" part of Himalayan mountaineering evades the Western and Korean mountaineers' views, the "not strong" part is untold by Sherpas. Sherpas introduce themselves, for example, at the first meeting with their clients by mentioning their climbing records, that is, the number

[136] To be recognized as having climbed a mountain without using oxygen, it is a convention that a mountaineer should not bring or breathe through the oxygen canister throughout the respective expedition. Keeping an oxygen bottle in Base Camp for emergency is allowed.

of summits they climbed. Counting the number may potentially serve to show off their physical strength and climbing aptitude. Sherpas also assume that reaching the top is the most important goal for foreign mountaineers.

6.5.2 Mountaineering as Social Gathering: The Paradox of Individualist Collectivism

For Walung and Makalu Sherpas, being with others is generally considered positive, while being alone is disturbing and needs to be avoided. When foreign mountaineers acclimatize, condition, and meditate, climbing Sherpas carry loads and take rest. In doing so, one of their most characteristic behavioral features is that they prefer to undertake these as a group, never alone. This subsection examines Sherpa collectivism during mountaineering. I suggest that Sherpa collectivism is valued individually and democratically in a way that reemphasizes Sherpa ethnic distinctiveness.

The Sherpa manner of interpersonal relationship is practiced in an embodied way. For Sherpas of Walung, temperature is a salient aspect of the environment and plays as a significant metaphor with which they might describe the quality of a given circumstance. In the village context, Sherpas often describe a situation packed with many people as "warm" (WS. *chholum lasung*) with positive connotations, and that of few people as "cold" (WS. *kheba lasung*) with negative connotations. However, it seems that the warm/cold division does not directly parallel with a universal positive/negative division (§7.4). Cold, too, can be associated with positivity. Along with Seduwa, the Sherpa settlements in Walung are located higher in elevation (1,900-2,200m/6,300-7,200ft) than most other nearby settlements. Some villagers said that the Sherpas prefer to live there

because of the cold climate. Winter is the season of a year when they engage in various village ceremonial gatherings including weddings, dhaaja puja (yearly household ritual, §2.4), and Losar (Tibetan New Year), marking the beginning of each year. I discussed above (§2.4) the concentration of these collective rituals in the winter months, which reemphasizes and habituates a particular spatio-temporal cosmic order for the Sherpas of Walung—but not Sherpas of other regions or other Tibetan Buddhists. This cosmic orientation continues in the face of transformation of agricultural and occupational arrangements, particularly with regard to the recent wave of participation in mountaineering expeditions. Only in winter do they expect spontaneous cordiality as neighbors are frequently drop by, with whom they share chhang and enjoy the pleasant warmth under the sun that shine only four to five hours a day. The Sherpas thereby refer to the winter exclusively as a delightful period of time with a rationalization of the metaphor of weather being fine and the sky being clear. In this metaphoric emphasis, they easily ignore the occasional snow. Besides, the long winter night is certainly too cold and miserable to be enjoyable even for the hardy Tibetan highlanders. Yet, they keep themselves warm by, for instance, sleeping shoulder to shoulder. In sum, the cold draws them together to get warmth, and the opposition between the pairs of cold/dissociation and of warmth/consociation is a prerequisite for an anticipation of joy. In short, cold is not only a metaphor but a perceptive phenomenon with an ethical quality frequently employed by Walung Sherpas to conduct enjoyable social gatherings and express the value of collectivity.



Figure 6-6. Load carrying is a main labor for Sherpas. Two Sherpas pair to carry loads to Camp Two of Mt. Everest. September 21, 2012. Photo by the author.

The preference of "being with many" is not merely meant to keep their bodies warm, nor directly corresponds to the cordiality of expedition gathering. The paradoxical perception of cold hints at the paradoxical coinage of individualist collectivism. As I outlined above (§6.1), Sherpas of Walung display a particularly individualistic lifestyle. The scattered household construction is exceptional in contrast to most other Tibetan-dialect speaking communities including Sherpas of Khumbu and lowland Nepalis.[137] Young adult Walung Sherpa males recollected that staying at kharkas (mountain hut) for weeks to watch cattle was a kind of work they disliked and referred to as "boring" (S.

[137] For example, according to Gellner (1992:18), Newars, the indigenous people of the Kathmandu Valley, prefer "to live next door to his kin and an hour's walk from their fields rather than the other way around."

bor-lasung). Individual Sherpas have developed differing afno manchhe connections and supplemental job options often undisclosed to close friends. An opposition is noticeable: the occasional social consociations come into focus in relation to the general individualist pattern of life. This figure/ground relationship is a distinctive feature of Walung Sherpas compared to neighboring non-Sherpa Nepalis. The latter, too, consider being alone to be avoided and being in company to be preferred in everyday affairs. Even so, they rarely adapt themselves to the markedly individualistic style of life displayed by the Sherpa. Being alone, perceived as an unavoidable component of everyday life, is therefore considered simultaneously inevitable and miserable. I have never seen a high porter carry loads alone from camp to camp; one may even say with certainty that a single dot on the face afar is not a Sherpa. Unlike some of their foreign-client climbers, few Sherpas will gladly stay a night alone in a tent during mountain climbing and trekking.

Among the positively valued qualities of "being with many" are awareness, conviviality, and consociation. Every Sherpa in the village—old or young, male or female—eagerly enjoys rare gatherings like the bazaar. Favoring being with many refers not just to focusing on the greater number but to the high frequency of intimacy with others and to an expectation of it. Tendi was eagerly looking forward to a village bazaar, saying, "The bazaar is very fun because many young people will come there. On other days, there are only old people" (August 22, 2013). For the same reason, younger male adults, as opposed to elders, prefer to migrate to and live in Kathmandu (fun yet dangerous) rather than in Walung (boring yet salubrious), except during the winter when

they visit and stay for weeks to participate in kinsmen's weddings and other communal rituals.

As I argued above, Sherpas consider the generous tipping convention of the Chinese an expression of their good relationship with Sherpas. Some Sherpas find from Chinese mountaineers an exceptional intimacy. "Sanu Kancha" Pasang, who worked for the kitchen staff on Camp Two of Mt. Everest in the spring of 2013, reasoned to me why he liked Chinese more than other nationals. He said,

> At the yellow rock [a point in between Camp Three and Four], a Chinese member I met at lower camps said hello to me in Chinese because he didn't know English or Nepali. Koreans or Chinese would greet me if they know me. However, other foreigners, if I greeted them, would just ask "who are you?" (July 12, 2013)

These close interpersonal relationships further provide a ground on which a variety of enjoyable activities may occur, so that an expectation of being with many is a habitual valuation in regard to social relationships. For example, although it is customary, no Sherpa can say with a certainty that a "Sherpa dance" will take place before it actually happens at the end of a monthly gathering of lama thyolden, a village religious mass.[138] Yet there exists a shared expectation of it, so that most of the people remain at the yard of the lama's house, looking for someone to lead off the dance for a while, after the official ceremony concluded.

For the Sherpas, therefore, being able to join large groups as climbing guides, as they are supposedly more enjoyable as a social gathering, is one of the major concerns

[138] Among the Sherpa of Khumbu, *tolden* means yogi (Ortner 1989:43).

when it comes to mountaineering expeditions.[139] As they are used to counting the number and names of the peaks they previously climbed, when asked about more details of the climbs, the Sherpas regularly recall the number of members and of climbing guides, and stress them if the numbers were "big." The SST group was the largest on Mt. Everest in the spring of 2013 and comprised seventy-two clients (of four sub-teams), eighty-two climbing Sherpas, seven Base Camp managers, and about fifty kitchen-staff members. Managers highly valued their group being larger than other teams on the mountain, and hired Nepalis seemed content to be in a company with many people. On the other hand, some Sherpas are aware of recent concern in the West about Mt. Everest being over crowded. Tashi, one of the Base Camp managers, said, "That's true. Too many people climb the mountain these years, because it is the highest one. Yet, only very few people have a problem with that, and indeed many people have interests in climbing the mountain" (Personal conversation, July 18, 2012).

The preference of joining a large expedition has little, if any, conflict with economic interest as I outlined above. For a spring season's climb, I had been considering whether I should join expeditions that climb Annapurna I or Mt. Everest. Tendi, then my close friend, asked me to climb Mt. Everest with him (December, 29, 2012). About a year later, he told me in a similar tone, "Joining a Kangchenjunga expedition is not a good idea. Wage is small, and, my friend said, the climbing route is not good as well. I think I will go to Everest with a Chinese lady I climbed together at the last Manaslu expedition.

[139] Through his Facebook, Tashi publicized SST by posting a few pictures of crowded Everest Base Camp, noting, "Himali [mountainous] Bazaar of Nepal (Himalaya) could be your next destination!" (T. Sherpa 2015)

Perhaps twelve or thirteen Chinese climbers will come to Everest this season" (December 6, 2013). In his consideration of expedition destination, economic interest is a concrete, attainable, and comparable element of participating in the mountain tourism industry, a consideration for which climbing with friends may make the climb more enjoyable.

Being a member of a "big" group is privileged from the perspective of Sherpa individualist collectivism by virtue of its ideal achievement of both individuality and democracy. In Nepal in general, the idea of "big" associated with a group of people signifies a privileged status over other groups, such as the native comparison between caste groups.[140] In particular, the "big-little" dichotomy (Gellner 1992:45) popularly parallels with the superiority-inferiority distinction in the locally practiced categorization of humans, expressing Sherpa cultural notions of individual competitiveness amid shared egalitarian ideals (Ortner 1989). An interesting feature of the large gathering is that the Sherpas hardly construct the group structure hierarchically. They practice their collectivism democratically and individualistically. For example, in village parties such as weddings, a number of Sherpa males (normally teenagers to those in their thirties) come to help the host by serving dishes and other chores. "Everyone just comes and helps," villagers would casually respond if asked about the helping. One may or may not want to help serve from the participant's point of view, so the boundary between the server and the served is always unclear in their minds. On the other hand, there exists clearly a set of social and psychological principles—young males of close kin

[140] Rather than "high-low," the "big-little" dichotomy is used in describing caste hierarchy in Nepal as well as in Assam (Gellner 1992:45).

relationships, and not others, are more likely to wish to volunteer to do the chores. It is individualistic as long as no one would feel compelled or ask others to do so. It is democratic as long as the choice is really open to everyone. This democratically perceived individualistic collectivism is a characteristic feature of Sherpa participation in mountaineering expeditions. I asked Tashi, then the Base Camp manager, about the frequent association of Russel Brice—a New Zealand mountaineer and the longtime organizer of the large HiMex group—to be "the leader of the Everest family" in the discourses of the climbing communities in the West. He said,

> We are all working together, and we are all mountaineers. I don't like "the biggest"—the leader. At the moment Sherpas are very smart. They know what to do; they have experience. It is not important that [Western expedition organizers] think they are "big." If they think so, it's not true. Long time ago, one European shouted and ordered to twenty Sherpas. But now it cannot be the case. If they think they are big men, they're making a mistake; this is [Sherpa] area; [Sherpa] have experience. (Personal conversation, May 16, 2013)

This democratic collectivism goes together with Sherpa individualism and, in a way, maintains local ethics and collective rights. This specific collectivism is the assets from which they derive collective power and their cosmopolitan approach to the globalized world. It also mitigates the stiff employer/employee relationship within their own community.

Yet this general collectivistic scheme may ignore differing attitudes towards Sherpa collectivism. The fun aspect the Sherpas enjoy by engaging in the "big" community is not necessarily what their clients easily engage in. The democracy within the Sherpa community may be inoperative on larger scales. In 2013, SST devised



Figure 6-7. Tashi Sherpa at Base Camp of Mt. Everest. May 16, 2013. Photo by the author.

unprecedented conveniences at Base Camp: a bakery, a bar, TV rooms, outdoor theater (with a projector), and dance nights. These facilities were intended to help the clients relax and rest while staying at the camp. As it turned out, however, while many Sherpas relished them, most foreign clients preferred to relax in solitude and rarely reveled in the facilities and especially the rowdy dance nights. Likewise, not all Sherpas rejoiced in all these new entertainments. A few Sherpas thought this reformation harmful to upcoming climbs. Nor is being in a big group not always welcome. An experienced Sherpa mountaineer warned me against having a massive group, saying, "Last spring when the

members were only three was good: good organizing. However, a big team could cause bigger problems and many arguments" (March 23, 2013).

In sum, the Sherpas measure mountaineering experience in terms of masculine quality and social potentials. They lay little value on the mental pleasure of challenging risk, virtue cultivation by meditating, the ethics of sportsmanship, an individual fame over other team members, and so on. Economic interest supplies a conspicuous rationale, and yet it does so in a way bolstering the two values. This characterization is a generalization to avoid essentializing Sherpa mountaineering experience and instead to provide a point of departure for a future discussion of Sherpa diversity and differentiation.

6.6 International Relationship

This section examines Walung and Makalu Sherpas' international experiences induced by Himalayan mountaineering. First, I outline a theoretical framework by which one may consider the international aspect of Himalayan mountaineering. Second, I describe international conditions and opportunities some Sherpas came across recently. Notable international opportunities include international marriage and labor migration. Finally, I provide a Sherpa's case in which his participation in mountaineering ended up engaging in an illegal labor migration. The goal of this section is to provide a wider view of Sherpas' experiences revolving around Himalayan mountaineering.

From its inception in the late nineteenth century, Himalayan mountaineering has always been a transnational, cosmopolitan, and globalizing phenomenon. It is

transnational in the sense that visiting mountaineers and local populations interact, collaborate, and contest with one another under evolving social and cultural frameworks. The frameworks are evolving in recurrent transnational contexts, wherein, for example, an increasing number of non-guide Nepali mountaineers are participating in the sport in a manner keen to the perceptions of world mountaineers and to the discourses of other parts of the world. For that matter, Himalayan mountaineering occurs not just in transnational contexts, but in a cosmopolitan condition: each climbing instance is presumed to take place within a global-scale society that both encompasses and surpasses Western, Nepali, or any other territory-bound epistemologies and ethics. Each mountaineering expedition, moreover, exhibits the process of globalization, affecting and being affected by in an intensifying scale what happens in other parts of the world through media, industry, and institutional networks across national borders. If the British colonial authorities' recruitments of "Gurkha" soldiers in Nepal from the early nineteenth century was the first step towards a "globalization of manpower" in the country (Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecha 2014:20), the Sherpa's participation in Himalayan mountaineering stands as its second step.

Locating Himalayan mountaineering in the middle of this threefold international nexus, there is a tendency to view the Sherpa as a counterpart paring with Western (or foreign) participants in the sport. This host-and-guest dyadic conception that presupposes tourists as "the cause of change" (Nash 1977:33) of receiving societies is prevalent in the scholarly discourse of mountain tourism in Nepal. Francis Khek Gee Lim (2008) calls tourists in Langtang National Park in northern Nepal "harbingers of wealth" to the local

people for several reasons. The people living in the region generally consider, according to Lim, foreign tourists to have boosted the local economy, created employment opportunities, sponsored some of their children's education, and assisted them to go overseas enabling them to access better life options (Lim 2008). He argues that as much as the tourists view the locals via the romantic and aesthetic tourist gaze, in a parallel way the locals view the tourists via a "counter gaze" upon imagined "foreignscapes." This supposed practices of mutual gazing turn into, as a theoretical extension, what Vincanne Adams calls "representation" and "simulation": "imagery operates at the level of both *representation* of qualities Sherpas actually exhibit and *simulation* of qualities imputed to Sherpas because they are desired by the Other" (Adams 1996:228). Adams calls such deployed Sherpa "virtual Sherpa," who are "produced both by a Western gaze and by Sherpas who are the object of that gaze" (ibid., 228).[141] While criticizing Adams's deterministic view, yet in a similar Sherpa-versus-visitor dyadic scheme, Ortner outlines her program, saying, "I will argue that the engagement between Sherpas and sahibs can only be understood in terms of the different ways in which each entered into the reality and the imagination of the other, in relation to the games they brought with them and the games that evolved in place" (Ortner 1999:24). Finally, Fisher asks, "Are Sherpas being Westernized?" (Fisher 1990:133).

This academic discourse may describe, as it does, in detail how Westerners have imagined Sherpas and *vice versa*. However, in their encounters with foreign visitors, the

[141] In his next monograph *Doctors for Democracy* (1998), Adams does not adopt the local-Western duality, but document the Nepali doctors' idealized duality of corruption-premodern and science-modern-universal.

locals are assumed to be equipped with a universal capacity by mirroring the Western visitors. I criticized the eurocentric assumptions as "anthromanticism" in Chapter 3 (§3.3). Moreover, this dyadic concept views the Sherpa as always a counterpart of some visitors, waiting someone coming from elsewhere and lacking something if seen alone. I also consider the alternatively proposed concept "East-East connections" (Letizia 2014:294) insufficient since partners connected are changed in this conception while the sociological "connection" remains at the center of human life. My concept of cosmic disposition avoids this sociological reductionism (§2.4; §3.3) prevalent in the academic discourse on crossing-border phenomena. By describing opportunities, conditions, and challenges in the encounters from the fundamentally distinctive Sherpa perspective and not reducing the encounters to eurocentric sociological logics, the threefold international experience can be described in their own terms.

It seems that most Nepalis embrace foreign visitors through the principle of external integration (Bista 1991:33) outlined above as a nationwide and longstanding characteristic that takes a moral and religious relativism as the basic social logic relating diverse ethnic and religious factions. This integrative tendency is exhibited by most Nepalis when engaging with foreign visitors in Himalayan mountaineering. Their vernacular cosmopolitan approach is derived from this tendency. Nepal Mountaineering Association, for example, states that "tourism is the only sector that unites people and country though they are divided by politics therefore climbers should be regarded as people representing peace and harmony" (Editor 2013b).[142] *The Kathmandu Post*

[142] Nepal's policies and national sentiments towards foreign countries have largely been friendly. For

comments that effective government management with a civil administration at the Base Camp of Mt. Everest is "surely better than nothing," for "[t]his will not just regulate mountaineering there but will also facilitate it" (Khadka 2014). Of course, this friendly gesture towards foreigners hardly means that Nepalis would compliantly appreciate whatever the visitors do in their country. Inasmuch as they are appreciative, they expect the same from the foreigners. Mingma once called for "respect" when he made a short speech at a dinner table with Korean members of the 2012 Korean Peace Everest Expedition. He said,

> I came from a very remote area and had been very poor. However, I was able to grow my business by respecting others. Members, Sherpas, cook, and kitchen boys are like a family. They have to respect each other so that they help each other and make a stronger team. (August 30, 2012)

This plea for respect, intimacy, and understanding expresses one of the main concerns shared by Sherpa mountaineers in their international encounters. Here, it is not my intention to argue for his plea, nor do I attempt to explicate the meaning of "respect"; I merely provide a wider perspective from which one may glimpse the ways how Sherpas perceive the international conditions in accordance to their own ethics and epistemology.

It is hard to be fair if one examines the international conditions without taking into account the remarkable wave of labor migration now popular in Nepal, a wave once

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example, a protest against "friendly nations" is illegal in Nepal. An example of mountaineering is that, considering the growing concerns from the West about environmental problems in Himalaya, two expeditions were organized by the Nepalis and climbed Mt. Everest to collect trash. A Sherpa in one of the expeditions narrated, "It is not very glamorous to come to the world's highest peak to pick up trash. But unless we begin to, we are worried people may not come at all" (Richter 1989:174).

dubbed "exodus" (Toffin 2013:107). The number of Nepalis working outside the country, permanently or temporarily, has been estimated 3 million to 6.5 million (Brusle 2010:16; quoted from Toffin and Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecha 2014: 19; Nepalnews.com, 15 July 2010; quoted from Brusle 2014:159). Nepal is identified by the United Nations as one of the sixteen "Service exporters" and one of the top five countries where remittances represent a significant share of gross national income of the country (23% in 2009 and more than 25% in 2011-12, The World Bank 2011; United Nations 2013; Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecha 2014:21). In 2011, more than two million Nepalis engaged in works abroad and the number has been increasing (Sijapati and Limbu 2012). Reportedly, 1,500 youths left Nepal each day to foreign countries except India—where they can legally enter without visa issuance—seeking better jobs and education.

Himalayan mountaineering provides to Sherpas more opportunities for international experience than other Nepalis in general. From every household or two in upper Walung I counted at least one Sherpa male or female living abroad, while less villagers of lower Walung do so. To give an example, on Camp Three of Mt. Everest, I met an Argentine woman having just climbed down from the summit. Referring to her accompanying Sherpa (of SST), she said, "He is very strong. Around the Hillary Step, the wind turned into being very strong and I was afraid. Yet, he said 'it's okay' and we got to the top. I am going to invite him to Argentina" (May 19, 2013). There are numerous cases similar to this encounter that in the end drastically changed Sherpas' lives.[143]

[143] Another example is that several years ago Temba of Nurbugaon was guiding a Czech group at a trekking. One old man was befriended by Temba. The Czech, without a child, formally invited Temba's son, Phur Tenji, to his country to work—helping issue the visa with an invitation letter and paying the trip

Beyond international traveling, Sherpas expect such an invitation as an opportunity to engage in labor migration. Like most other Sherpas, Makalu Sherpas' international experience significantly resonates with labor migration. Mingma's own life history shows this kind of international experience. He is arguably the most socially important figure in the Makalu Sherpa society today because of his organizing many expeditions that provide an unprecedented range of job opportunities to his fellow villagers. In 2011, he became the first Nepali completing climbing the summits of all fourteen over-eight-thousand-meter peaks. Conceiving this idea at least since 2004 (Personal Conversation with Seong-Bo Shim, January 24, 2016), he climbed nine among the fourteen peaks between 2000 and 2004 and the other five between 2010 and 2011. In between the two periods, he lived in Japan and worked at a factory. He was able to migrate to Japan because his maternal cousin, "Japani" Purba Ongdi Sherpa of Walung, assisted him. In 1986, Purba was working as a trekking Sherpa and, at one of his trips, assisted an old Japanese trekker, who later invited him to his country. Thereafter, Purba was able to make in total five visits to Japan, helping Mingma and other Sherpas move to the country to work and also staying there at the same period with Mingma. Yet, it was an illegal stay, and finally all of them were arrested and deported to Nepal. Purba, with his saved money, purchased a piece of land and built a hotel at Num, a day's walk from Walung. Mingma, on the other hand, spent his money to join expeditions as a climber to complete the fourteen-peak project.

cost. The son was hired as a secondary chef at a restaurant in one of the cities in the country in 2013, and by far (2015) working there.

This brief life-history illustrates that some of the most significant opportunities in the Sherpas' lives may come about from the international encounters, opportunities often beyond their range of feasible expectation. The circumstances in which they find themselves are radically global in this sense—they envision courses of their future life by actively appreciating ambiguous possibilities from afar. What is striking is the Sherpas' collective ease when they appreciate one of the ambiguous possibilities actualized beyond their leverage. My historical concept of open-closed chronology captures this pattern in which they actively navigate through all this unpredictability and materialize new social and economic opportunities.

International marriage is another popular link through which the Sherpas collectively perceive, expect, and react to international possibilities recently. It has been a village custom by which Sherpa ladies get married with Western visitors in the past and South Koreans through brokers more recently.[144] During the research period, four teenage Sherpa girls from upper Walung were added to the trend of Sherpa-Korean marriage. While some marriages proved to be happy from the remaining Sherpa family's point of view, others seemed apparently not. Sherpa women's divorces in international marriage have not been infrequent. As the divorced wife's visa would soon expire, a

[144] A notable exception to this stereotype in Walung was Mingma, who married a Japanese woman around 2000 and lived together in Walung for three months. This marriage was abruptly ended by the woman's enraged parents visiting from Japan and carrying her away.
Participation in mountaineering and trekking has allowed a few Sherpa men, married or unmarried, to engage in serious relationships with female travelers, although this seems infrequent among Makalu Sherpas. A Walung Sherpa guided a Japanese woman climbing Mt. Everest in the spring of 2013. After the climb, they proclaimed their marriage. The lady continued climbing Himalayan mountains and we met at the office of SST. "Where would you be living then—here or her country?" To my impatient prying, the Sherpa said, "She will live with me here in Kathmandu." About two months later, I met him and asked about the relationship again. He said, "We're just friends now. She's gone."

number of Walung Sherpa ladies were, in such a way, known to live in the country illegally. This kind of illegality relating to state bureaucracy in its own right has rarely been a serious matter among the Sherpas.

Divorced or not, international marriage provides international opportunities for many Sherpas who are related to the woman. Most Sherpa men and women staying in South Korea, legally or illegally, have been continuing to maintain substantive connections with people in their home country. Facebook, Skype, and international phone calls are popular tools that have easily allowed them to connect transnationally—not only those in Korea but Japan, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, the US and so on. They play as "bridges" for further migrations. A few years ago, a Sherpa woman from Seduwa who had married a Korean director of a factory near Seoul assisted nine Sherpas to come into the country with proper visas and work permits. They were paid one million Korean won (about $900) per month and provided with meals and places to stay. A quick comparison speaks to most Sherpas about a vision economically better than that of mountaineering. South Korea is generally considered a lucrative work destination for many Nepali youths because of the good salary, lower amount of living costs (compared to Japan), and low departure costs, based upon the idealized dreams motivated by consumerism and popular culture in contemporary Nepal (Hindman and Oppenheim 2014).[145]

[145] Labor migration is obviously one of the major phenomena in contemporary Nepal. Sharma observes, "The concept of 'culture of migration' adequately captures the pervasive nature of migration in the middle hills [of Nepal], which has remained a historical practice among the hill households and that migration decision is a part of everyday experience, and households consider migration as one of the key strategies of managing their livelihoods amid fragile socioeconomic, environmental, and political contexts" (Sharma 2014:121).

Considering better economic opportunities, many Nepalis regard the US, not Korea, as the final destination. A number of Walung Sherpas, who tried to procure a Korean visa or already made a visit to Korea for tourism, said to me that if one had a Korean visa stamp on their passports, it would become easier for them to pass muster on the examination to get the American visa later (for Nepalis' migration pattern to the US see Sijapati 2012). For example, a Sherpa in his early thirties came by the SST office to issue a recommendation letter as part of his visa application at the Korean embassy in Kathmandu. He seemed confident that the embassy would finally issue a tourist visa for his visit to the country because, he said,

> So far I visited China three times for business and climbing, Hong Kong once for holiday with my cousin who was a soldier there, Malaysia once just for enjoying, Thailand also once for the same reason, and Myanmar once for business. All these visa stamps are still in my passport." (Personal conversation, December 23, 2013)

His final destination was the US. Yet, this was not truly the final but part of the course of his life, as he continued, "If I can't get the Korean visa, I'll try the visa for the UK. Anyways, once I enter the US, I'd like to do some business. I know a big man from another agency who is doing a big business. From him, I'll purchase goods and sell them in the US" (ibid.). A staff member in the SST office joined our conversation, sharing his own version of future plan moving abroad and asking the "big" businessman's phone number. Pasang gave it to him. This anecdote illustrates that Sherpas envision international experience such as labor migration or international marriage not as "foreign" as opposed to "home," but as part of their domestic life. The SST office, for

example, is global in its capacity of issuing the letter of recommendation and of providing a venue of sharing interpersonal connections.

Case: Tenjing's Frostbitten Hands and Illegal Migration

The twenty-three-year-old Tenjing was one of the two Sherpas hired at the Polish expedition to Lhotse in the autumn of 2012. The Polish team stationed at the Everest Base Camp of the Nepal side and climbed most of the route side by side with a Korean Mt. Everest expedition in which I was a climbing member. Thus, the Lhotse Face should be climbed with manpower from the collaboration of the two teams. While they fixed the rope up to around one hundred meter below Camp Four of Lhotse (the final camp), they climbed to the top without fixing a rope. Planning to climb the mountain, I struggled myself to climb and set up a small tent next to the Polish climbers, in which a Russian climber stayed with me. It was a miserable night due to continued snow showers and small avalanches that finally crushed our tiny shelter. The next morning, while others persisted to go beyond, I opted out from the summit attempt and climbed down to Camp Two.

It was early the next morning when the Korean-team's team-guide Ngaa Tenji, as he was climbing up to Camp Four of Mt. Everest, discovered a body lying on the glacier at the foot of the sheer Lhotse face. The body was later found to be of Temba, one of the two Polish Sherpas, who fell to his death while retreating from the unsuccessful summit attempt. As I and my Korean and Sherpa colleagues were retrieving the body, the Polish team were climbing down to Camp Two, assisting Tenjing who was unable to handle the

rope and gears with his severely frostbitten hands. With the dead body of Temba and myself (because the Lhotse climb concluded), he was evacuated by a helicopter to Kathmandu for a prompt medical treatment.

At the hospital in Kathmandu he learned that what he could do with his fingers was nothing but cutting off most of the digits. Then, expecting to receive a better treatment and amputate less digits, he asked me help him to get a three-month medical tourism visa to South Korea, and I assisted him preparing a set of documents he submitted to the Korean embassy in Kathmandu. A few months later, finally he flew to Korea and was able to get treated his fingers, amputating only four knuckles.

After he recovered from the surgery, however, he did not come back to Nepal. Instead, he began working at a gas station in a city near Seoul from since. I met him again in Seoul in the fall of 2015, at a Tibetan-Nepali restaurant. "The owner of the gas station is a very good person," he said. "He likes me, and so he asked me to bring more friends to work together. So now I am working and living with two Nepalis." Tenjing has been trying to make his status in the country legal assisted by a lawyer, albeit so far being unsuccessful, so that he would go back to Nepal and come to Korea regularly. The salary he was receiving monthly is better than what most Nepali immigrant workers normally expect.[146] *He was still feeling pain in his fingers in cold wintry days. This was a concern for him because he wished to climb mountains as a climbing Sherpa like*

[146] Condition of work environment and treatment to migrant workers in South Korea seem generally unsatisfactory for Nepalis. Fifty seven Nepali workers have died in South Korea from 2007 through 2013, a majority of the deaths categorized as suicide. In a report of the Nepal's embassy in South Korea notes, "Korea's ineffective labour laws and inhumane treatment of the workers are dragging the poorly paid migrant workers to death" (Editor 2013a).



Figure 6-8. Tenjing smiles with his frostbitten hands. October 23, 2012. Photo by the author.

before. He was expecting about two years later to come back to Nepal and start climbing again. He said, "Maybe a few years later, there will be no more pain in my fingers, so that I can climb high on the mountain, not just staying in Base Camp. Besides, I am also thinking about doing some businesses between Nepal and Korea—like buying outdoor clothings in Korea and selling them in Nepal. How do you think about this?" (Personal conversation, October 20, 2015)

Tenjing's life personifies many facets of Sherpa international experience revolving around Himalayan mountaineering. Before the 2012 Everest expedition, his mountaineering experience was limited. During the critical night he never reported to the Polish leader that he felt pain in his fingers before he became unable to use them. "A

Sherpa must be strong," he said. It was the best ethic for him to conform to the masculine ideal in his accompanying the foreign visitors. The overarching integrative attitude to the foreign mountaineer is presupposed as a fundamental ethic in both his climbing and recollection.

In sum, Himalayan mountaineering offers Makalu Sherpas a key link for experiences that are transnational, cosmopolitan, and global. International marriage and labor migration are two of the most conspicuously practiced international experiences among Walung and Makalu Sherpas in recent years. Though not many Sherpas engage in international marriage or labor migration, most, if not all, domestic experiences imply global potentials. Viewing the Sherpas as "counterparts" of the visitors misleads about their cosmopolitan capacity. Visiting mountaineers and their impacts are opportunities, conditions, and challenges the Sherpas deal with in accordance with their own cosmic disposition.

6.7 Open Future and Closed Past: Reconsidering Fatalism

This section examines Walung and Makalu Sherpas' distinctive approach to potential options and actual occurring. While the Sherpas implement a highly diverse approach for subsistence, they do so with considerable ease. I discuss the particular ease Sherpas display in their dealing with uncertain future and shifting present. By reconsidering fatalism, I propose the concept of open-closed chronology to characterize the manner. The main example is a Sherpa man's envisioning of potential future options.

Fisher describes the inconclusive attitude Sherpas displayed towards the "torrent of tourists," quoting a village lama's analogy of flood and saying, "[T]hey just come every year and there is really not much anyone can do about it" (Fisher 1986:58). Sherpas of Walung have appreciated the torrent and other new waves in flexible terms. The flexibility is obvious in the ways in which they approach the future with mutually exclusive opportunities and yet they earnestly appreciate them simultaneously. The pressure of choosing one among other options and pursuing it as *the* major object seems less compulsory than non-Sherpas. I call this characteristic approach to the future "open future," meaning a way of perceiving the future by actively dealing with potential options without delimiting the scope of the potentiality.

I am not arguing that diversity is a distinctive characteristic of Sherpa subsistence strategy. Their subsistence strategies may or may not be diverse in accordance to the economic and social circumstance. In recent years, Sherpas in Walung envision and engage in a wide variety of subsistence strategy. Stevens observed among the Khumbu Sherpas multiplied subsistence strategies and differentiations in economic options. "Individual families," he noted, "may practice more than one of [household labor, land, livestock, and fiscal resources] over a period of years as their resources change and make possible impractical different subsistence practices" (Stevens 1997:88). It must be risky for the highlanders to rely heavily on a limited number of economic resources. Many Walung villagers have recently recognized economic potentials and engaged in raising cardamom (spice; N. *alanji*) and swertia (medicinal herb; WS. *chiraute*; N. *chiretta*) and picking yarchagumba (S., T; Ophiocordyceps sinensis or caterpillar fungus; N. *kira*;),

thanks to the globalizing market burgeoning in both micro (northern Sankhuwasabha) and macro (across the Himalayan chain) levels. However, the newly adopted crops' prices have been changing widely. The availability of yarchagumba was highly uncertain as well.[147] Most Sherpas of Walung have been practicing this multiplication of subsistence strategy, no matter whether in the harsh environmental conditions in the Himalayas or in bustling urban towns. Most Sherpa male adults recently working as climbing guides seemed not to want to sell their lands back in Walung. Pasang, the proprietor of ED, has oftentimes led trekking groups of ten or twenty days, distributing his name cards that make use of both sides, one describing the restaurant and the other advertising himself being a licensed climbing guide and a trekking organizer. Mingma's brothers also utilize their affordable cash to make direct purchases of yarchagumba during the off seasons, avoiding tax collectors by helicoptering off to Kathmandu. In all this diversity of subsistence strategy is no uniqueness as they strategically invest their time and efforts to deal with the uncertain future and shifting present.

The point I focus on is the distinctive ease displayed by the Sherpas when they deploy the diversity. I argue that the Sherpas' manner of dealing with the uncertainty is exceptionally active among other Nepalis. Their strategy is to attach little regret to options that are pursued yet discarded in the end. When considering those active social movements in contemporary Nepal, some thinkers regard the notion of fatalism as no

[147] During the first trimester of 2013-14 fiscal year, the export rate of cardamom grew 54.3 percent, while medicinal herbs including chiretta declined 45.3 percent (Khanal 2013). The availability of yarchagumba was dwindling rapidly. During June and July of 2013, thousands of local collectors gathered only four hundred grams per person on average, while in 2012 it was fifteen hundred grams (Dewan 2013). In 2013, it cost 1,000 rupees per kilogram, as well as each collector should pay 1,000 rupees to Makalu-Barun National Park to acquire permission for the picking.

longer relevant in understanding of the society. Catherine Sanders and her colleagues argued, "Let's leave aside 'fatalism and development' [the title of Bista's monograph] like we've left aside concepts of peasants hamstrung by a 'limited good' worldview" (Sanders et al. 2015:8). However, fatalism in Bista's (1991) original conception and particularly in my use of it to the concept of open future is not delimited to "passivity." As an aspect of the Sherpa cosmic disposition, the open-closed chronology allow the Sherpas to passively appreciate what is actualized already and thus "close" it off, while actively dealing with feasible possibilities—even more actively than those who still hold onto the past and seek possibilities there.

The idea of "active" demands further explanation. I use the term in the sense being alert and bearing interest (Preble 1956:15) while keeping relaxed. The Walung Sherpa word *kholé* may illustrate this. Kholé is mostly used in the imperative mood, such as "please," and some Sherpas consider to use kholé interchangeably with the Nepali *bistaari*, meaning "please, slowly," often used to encourage others to engage in what should be done. For example, at the end of a respite, someone might say "*kholé-khani dyé*" to others in the same way that they say "*bistaari jau*" in Nepali, meaning "let's go slowly" without pushing hard. On the other hand, Sherpas might say "*sing* [wood] *kholé*," meaning "bring the firewood." Thus, kholé may also mean "move," "bring," "do" or the like whereas the Nepali bistaari does not. Further, a Sherpa would hurriedly say "kholé!" to a boy precariously carrying a jar full of chhang, getting him more concerned about the task in order not to spill it. Therefore, in a Nepali sense kholé can mean "do it slowly, relaxed," while in an exclusively Sherpa sense it means "do it alertly." This alert-relaxed

combination, or, more generally, being active on the ground of being passive is a characteristic behavioral feature of Sherpa open-closed chronology, absent in the broader Nepali notion.

The following case is a young adult Sherpa man's future plans. His plans are not only multiple but are overlapped by one another. Yet, he was pursuing the apparently conflicting plans simultaneously. In this way, the activeness is preserved for most plans while those that will be discarded may keep little regret.

Case: Tendi's Open Future: Labor Migration, Three Pieces of Land, and Himalayan Mountaineering

Tendi Sherpa owned pieces of land in three locations: Mayum, Angluwa (both in Walung) and Num (a day's walk from Walung). The land in Mayum is about 0.7 acre, and currently used as a field for growing millet and chiraute as well as sheltering cows. He purchased it for four lakh rupees two years ago, and a villager asked him to sell it for six lakh which he refused since, as he put it, "it is the center [of Mayum]." Not only for the current locational advantage, as the trekking route-making plan is ongoing, if the plan materializes, the route will certainly pass through the Tendi's land and therefore raise its value. He could, then, consider whether to sell the land for a higher price or to build a hotel.

Tendi had another piece of land at the northern tip of Angluwa, the lowest Sherpa settlement of Walung. He and his brother Lhakpa purchased it for eighteen lakh rupees recently, without paying the full money to the former owner who now lived in Darjeeling.



Figure 6-9. Tendi is pointing from Num toward the Sherpa villages in upper Walung. July 27, 2012.

The size of the land was similar to that of Mayum, while it is adjacent to the main path and so more expensive. The land was currently under tenant farming. He wished to sell it for a higher price when the trekking route plan succeeded.

*Num's land, bought with Lhakpa, was the smallest yet of a greater interest. It was located at the northern tip of a dirt road that recently became accessible by vehicle. The town, which had been consisted of five houses about forty years ago, was now a thriving central town in northern Sankhuwasabha. A two-story hospital was under construction at the southern end of the town, next to which Tendi and Lhakpa's plot was located. "Once the hospital is built," Tendi said, "The price must get higher. Then I'd like to sell it." They were receiving yearly rents from tenants, sixteen thousand rupees in 2012, from barley (*gyaar*) cropping of a Numer. Like the brothers, six other Walung Sherpas invested in lands around Num.*

What Tendi planned to do with the land, as he said, slightly confused me: "There must be a parking lot beside the hospital. If I build a hotel on the land, many people should come to stay at the hotel as it is nearby." An apparent conflict in his indecision on the land increased as I noticed Tendi preparing two more conflicting plans: eager to join the Mt. Everest expedition at the upcoming spring season, he was appearing at Mingma's office every day, while, during the same period, he was considering about applying for a year-long work-permit visa to South Korea through costly smugglers. To realize this possible option, although undetermined, he already made an effort for issuing his new passport.

Tendi was one of the nine Sherpas who were hired to work in the Korean clothing factory assisted by the factory manager's Sherpa wife mentioned above. However, he was then without an appropriate visa. Initially, he flew to the country with his maternal uncle Tashi (now one of the directors of SST). Tashi was invited for tourism by Korean mountaineer Yeong-Ho Heo, who climbed Himalayas for many years and became friends with Tashi throughout expeditions. With Tashi, Tendi was able to join the trip by procuring a three-month tourist visa. Yet, at the end of the period he ran away. Tendi was first able to join the Nepali factory workers, and later worked in consecutively three jobs in different locations of the country before he was finally arrested and repatriated back to Nepal. He stayed there for eighteen months. "I wish to go to Korea again," he said. He believed that the past history of illegal stay would not cause a problem for him to go to the country again though, for a newly issued passport would keep no record of such matters. He continued,

It was nice when I was there [South Korea]. Others, too, made a lot of money earned a lot. When I came back here, I brought with me eight lakh rupees (around $7,000). So I bought the piece of land near Nishar, and from this land I am earning one lakh rupees (around $850) each year, because my father's sister paid me for the tenant farming of the land. I still want to buy the "Indian" land (a piece of land owned by a Sherpa who now lived in Darjeeling) in Angluwa but I don't have enough money for it. If I complete the laari *(the third and final phase of wedding in Sherpa custom) around a year later, then I should move out from the house and build a new one for myself. That will be the same with Lhakpa (the second brother) and Sanae (the third brother). However, since Kanchha (the youngest) studies in Kathmandu now, and, like many others, he may not come back to the village. I guess the property of my parents will go to Sanae. (Personal conversation, December 26, 2012)*

He was considering another, as he said, "I also like to go to Japan someday. If you do night work you earn a lot" (December 26, 2012). However, to move to Japan seems less feasible for him than to go to South Korea, and he described in detail how he might be able to enter South Korea.

If you pay $8,000 to the broker's office, the Nepali broker gets $4,000 and the Korean gets $4,000. There are many offices in Kathmandu through which you may go to Korea. One month later my friend of SoluKhumbu will go to Korea. He asked me once to go there together and come back here soon. In a year, you can work on Mt. Everest only three months and you make $2,000-3,000. Yet, in Korea you work throughout a year and get $1,000-2,000 per month. I may send money to my wife and son. Sanu worked in Korea for three months and was able to pay only the airfare. He couldn't make $8,000. $8,000 is a big money! Should it be a good idea? (Personal conversation, December 24, 2012)

About half a year later, he brought up with a more specific plan of labor migration.

> *If one person wants to go to Korea, then it costs $4,000. If two want to go together, then it will be $6,000. One of my friends from Rolwaling wants me to go together. His brother-in-law now lives in America, and his plan is to go to Korea and next to go to America, because if you have your Korean visa then it's easier to get the American visa. So, the plan is, after getting the three-month tourist visa, going to Korea and working at a restaurant. I also want to go to America since my sister-in-law now lives there. She said, if I pay $10,000 then I can stay there for three months. (Personal Conversation, July 9, 2013)*[148]

Conceiving multiple future plans by keeping all of their feasibility, Tendi's future looks wide open. He was certainly aware that there were conflicts between the multiple options—building a hotel in, raising crops in, and selling three pieces of land; joining a mountaineering expedition; and migrating to South Korea to work. In both 2013 and 2014, what he finally engaged himself in was joining Mt. Everest expedition. He was constantly changing his future plans, while keeping multiple and conflicting options feasible. It will be necessary to discard options except the one finally implemented. Instead of complaining his lost chances in the past, however, he was conceiving other feasible future options and devising new plans further. The passive activeness helps let go of the unresolved past and appreciate newness at its face value.[149]

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[148] The "Japani" Purba told me that it would cost ten to fifteen lakh rupee (around $11,000-17,000) for a Nepali to get a tourist visa for Japan and get a job there illegally beyond the allowed period (Personal conversation, August, 18, 2013). Indeed, this and other kinds of illegal migration are quite prevalent in Nepal. Newspapers have continuously reported about Nepali workers staying abroad illegally, for example, a few got caught and were detained in Kenyan jail when trying to sneak to the UK; a dozen in Mexico were caught on a truck when crossing the border to the US; around forty thousand Nepalis were facing deportation from Malaysia due to her implementation of a stricter policy, and so on.

[149] Another example is twenty nine year old Ngaa Tenji Sherpa. He was a long-time team guide in the expeditions of SST and a trustful cousin of the directors. However, he seemed prepared to discard the trust relationship with little compunction. He confidentially showed me the website of his own expedition and trekking agency that was still in the making. Meanwhile, while he was managing a small snooker business with a small cafe near Akasidhara, living with his wife and three young children, he expressed a number of times his liking of his birthplace home then being dilapidated in Nurbuchaaur. He wished to move back, for his wife was "uneducated and yet she could manage it" (Personal conversation, January 20, 2013). However, his daughter had begun schooling in the city, and this kept him from putting the

In sum, Walung and Makalu Sherpas deal with the uncertain future and shifting present in a characteristic diversity of subsistence strategy. While implementing subsistence strategies diversely is not unique at all, the Sherpas bring about the diversity at exceptional ease. My concept of open-closed chronology characterizes this feature. For them, time flows linearly to a highly uncertain and unknown future, and this appreciation is now normalized. I have not attempted to discuss why. I merely suggested that, though Bista's concept of fatalism is too simple, his Foucauldian genealogical approach to Nepali national character carries the most broad and historical understanding of distinctiveness in the context of Nepal.

6.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have suggested a threefold cosmic disposition of Walung and Makalu Sherpas: individualist collectivism, tantric monism, and open-closed chronology. This schematic disposition characterizes the Sherpas' experiences revolving around

desire into action (Personal conversation, April 8, 2013). Working as a climbing guide was for him too risky to continue for many years, as his previous Sherpa friends who "climbed with me, now left the climb, and went to foreign countries to work," which was a more reasonable option that he had considered many times and yet was unable to put into practice (Personal conversation, May 22, 2013). A solution he thought out was to "climb during the seasons and go to Korea and work there during the off seasons" (Personal conversation, June 20, 2013). A few days later, however, he decided not to do so after he attended a day at a Korean language school. In order to apply for jobs in South Korea, Nepalis needed to pass an official Korean language exam after the implementation of the 2007 Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries (cf. Hindman and Oppenheim 2014). In the classroom, he was struck by the great number of people wanting to learn Korean (Personal conversation, June 25, 2013). In the meantime, his old house in Walung was rebuilt in early 2014, as decided so at his five-brother gathering at the Losar of 2013, which was joined by the second eldest brother living in Boston as a lawful permanent resident.

Himalayan mountaineering. The three principles take into account aspects that are social, ontological, and intentional, respectively.

The Sherpas have reacted to the changing world in their own epistemological, ontological, and ethical terms. The industry of Himalayan mountaineering has been at the center of the Sherpas' collective life in recent decades. In the nationwide idea and practices of caste system, participation in the industry is considered Sherpa's ethnic vocation by fellow Nepalis as well as by themselves. Practicing the semi-migratory pattern, Walung Sherpas have formed their new homes collectively in a northeastern corner of Kathmandu, identifying themselves with Seduwa Sherpas and thereby referring to themselves as Makalu Sherpas. The features of reordering process such as this exhibit two principles: external integration and internal collection. While the former is shared by most Nepalis and practiced in relation to non-Sherpa Nepalis, the latter is the Sherpas' characteristic sociality. It is a Sherpa-centered centripetal social force. This social force underlies most aspects of Sherpa lives, including forming economic relationships, concluding employment contracts, and casting ethical judgments. That is, Sherpa ethnicity, a notion referring to practices of identification and senses of duty and obligation, is theoretically the more foundational than the Sherpas' economic, social, and ethical lives. Also, Sherpa ethnicity keeps its own distinctive characteristics in opposition to other ethnic groups, foreign visitors, state government bodies, and media representations, among others. An understanding of this ethnically induced particularity helps shed light on the cause and processes of the rise of Sherpa-exclusive agency

expedition as opposed to classic and eurocentric expedition in contemporary Himalayan mountaineering.

The recent trend of Sherpa monopoly of Himalayan mountaineering in the stylistic way is not merely a matter of economic and institutional transition, but a transformation of cosmopolitan landscape around Himalayan mountaineering and across the Himalayas. Unlike Western or Korean ideal approach to Himalayan mountaineering, the Sherpas' understanding takes into account what they privilege, that is, behavioral, concrete, and on-the-ground dimensions of the tourism industry. Fame and money, the two values the Sherpas suppose foreign mountaineers to seek after through the sport, provide an alternative and sometimes realistic understanding of Himalayan mountaineering. The Sherpas have increasingly made use of the global nexus with their characteristic ease in the face of unknown and uncertain future.

Thus, the Sherpas' experience in Himalayan mountaineering is non-Western in the sense that it is neither nature/culture-dualistic, mind/body-dualistic, nor individualistic. Nor is similar to Korean as it is neither superhuman-idealistic, mind/matter-dualistic, nor strictly hierarchical. It is individualistic on the ground of collectivism, tantric to constitute a monistic world, and open to the future and closed to the past. My aim in this chapter was not to make a general claim of Sherpa personality or of shared values. Nor did I commit to explain the socio-historical formation of those characteristics, though I have supplied in the introduction a brief Foucauldian genealogical overview of the making of the Sherpa cosmic disposition. By providing a general argument on the experiential aspect of Sherpas' participation in Himalayan

mountaineering, this chapter serves for the main goal of this dissertation to understand Sherpa intercultural experiences on the sport. This chapter pairs with the next chapter that focuses on the aspect in detail: Sherpa laughter as a way of communication.

Chapter 7. Sherpa Laughter: Unliving through Semiotic Embodiment

7.1 Introduction: Embodiment from a Pragmatic Phenomenological Perspective

This chapter argues for a "semiotic" notion of embodiment. For a methodology of investigating the phenomena of embodiment, I suggest three hypothetical phases that are involved in the process of embodiment, as an elemental structure of human experience: *immersion*, *cast*, and *transmission*. The three phases take place in a hypothetical sequence. The immersion phase refers to a primary perception. Since an observation of any "brute" perceptual element is not identical to the element but a representation of the element, the existence of immersion cannot be certain by any representational means and thus remains hypothetical. Peirce calls this "percept," and Merleau-Ponty defines this as a "non-thetic [non-positing], pre-obejctive and preconscious experience" (Merleau-Ponty 2002:281). Following this initial step, cast takes place, referring to one's first reaction to his or her own immersion in accordance to the grounding host of habits. Following the cast, the transmission, as a second reaction, defines what emerges as, in a customary manner, a phenomenon, an entity, or a value-laden quality, and may also trigger another transmission. As the self immerses, casts, and transmits sequentially, humans, things, and events simultaneously become themselves and come to assert their authority in one way or the other.[150] Therefore, this analytical disassembling of embodiment may accomplish

[150] In the anthropological problematizing of social phenomena, an ontological distinction has been popularly drawn between human and non-human materials. Arjun Appadurai suggested the concept of

both goals of the socio-historical perspective and of the phenomenological perspective: direct and genuine reactions (i.e. phenomenological) express themselves through distinctive ontology, epistemology, and ethics (i.e. socio-historical).

The terms I employ follow Peirce's scheme that classifies significant effects of signs into three: *emotional interpretant*, *energetic interpretant*, and *logical interpretant* (CP 5.475-6). Briefly, "emotional interpretant" refers to a direct feeling of an individual based on the perception of any sign. This initial, "brute" feeling secondarily raises further effect that may involve a muscular reaction such as grounding arms to a sergeant's command. Peirce calls this an "energetic interpretant." Finally, "logical interpretant" is a concept or a proposition that follows a conjecture of the energetic interpretant or another logical interpretant. This means that, as long as conjectures of a single event can be modified as time progresses, the logical interpretant, different from the other two, may change constantly and thus is in a relatively future tense (CP 5.475-81). My scheme of

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"thing-in-motion" in order to seize the otherwise frequently lost significance of the "concrete, historical circulation of things," the meanings of which "are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories" (Appadurai 1986:5). In his conception, human beings, in effect, hold the final agency. He noted, "even though from a theoretical point of view human actors encode things with significance, from a methodological point of view it is the things-in-motion that illuminate their human and social context" (ibid., 5). In a recent article, he clarifies the thing: things themselves are indeed hard to conceive, so what human agents, being "designers," deal with are "objects" that are "designed things" (Appadurai 2013:258-263). Thus, he argues, we live in the age of "designer humanity." Further, he criticizes Actor Network Theory (ANT), while acknowledging Latour's efforts to illuminate the significant missing link or "network." According to Appadurai, the innovative non-humanizing turnover is but to take a huge sociological tax on earlier ideas of sociality and "has evacuated from its accounts of sociality all the things that make human sociality so fascinating in the first place" (ibid., 258). For him, in its emphasis on the network, ANT has apparently failed in taking into account of "the materiality of nodes [that] makes its own active demands" (ibid., 258). While I agree with his conception of human sociality that becomes significant only in the midst of networking in which humans are located, the presumed asymmetry essentialized between humans and non-human materials raises a number of questions. In the first place, what he means by "material," "things," or "objects" are unclear; Peirce declared them to be "merely mind hidebound with habits" (CP 6.158). The specific objectivizing—a clear-cut ontological division between human and material—merely reminds of the academic eurocentrism (Descola 2013b).

the three phases of immersion, cast, and transmission parallels Peirce's classification and further attends to collective realms and their diversities—especially for cultural anthropological studies in which an observer inevitably carries his or her own regime of epistemology, ontology and ethics.

The following three sections discuss immersion, cast, and transmission each, regarding various dimensions of Walung Sherpas' lives, from village life to mountaineering contexts. Firstly, to highlight distinctive forms of immersion, I present relatively lengthy examples of Korean and Sherpa mountaineers' reactions to their colleagues' death. Second, to discuss cast, I focus on Sherpa characteristic laughter and joviality as a form of "semiotic communication." While patterned significances may emerge from the interplay between seriousness and unseriousness by employing or inducing laughter, Sherpa women are likely to take part in sustaining the ground on which the male plays of banter may ensue. Finally, the Sherpa characteristic preference of positivity to negativity leads to a characteristic style of transmission, which I call "unliving." By unliving, significances of life, in dimensions such as bodily feeling, aging, and social gathering, diminish as time progresses.

7.2 Immersion: Reactions toward Death

In order to investigate immersion, there is no way but to observe the cast, the first reaction to immersion, as it takes place hypothetically in the next phase of immersion. This investigation presents a methodological question: how could one observe the cast without endowing some register of a particular epistemology (or ontology)? The

methodology I am resorting to is what Peirce called *hypostatic abstraction*. Peirce said that hypostatic abstraction "renders general classes of predicates possible, and classes of those classes," because by means of hypostatic abstraction "we regard a thought as a thing" (EP2: 394). By following his logic, one may discuss an unknown format of ontology—for example, the "authorship of affect" I discuss below—without uniformly endowing one's own ontological presumptions.

In sociocultural anthropology and related disciplines, the notion of ontology has often been considered merely as a cultural "category." Strathern and Stewart, for example, noted that ontologies of being are implied in cultural categories, forming a framework of thinking, which further enters into people's perception and social action, thereby exerting pressure on forms of behavior (Strathern and Stewart 2000:59). In such a conception of ontology, the constitution of "being" in the "ontologies of being" emerges as predefined and remains unquestioned. In other words, the ontologies are, in Strathern and Stewart's view, discernible only from the diversity of thoughts and acts. Unquestioned is the nature of the "being"—the constitution, the internal architecture, and the external network—of the members that constitute the diversity. Such "beings" are, as Tiessen (2011) argues, only in retrospect seen as singular and regarded as independent individuals.

When discussing ontology and the nature of being, therefore, it is prerequisite to examine the matrix of factors under consideration: relationships that bring into being entities, the society that embeds the individuals, and phenomena that display the values of the entities and individuals. What is the logic through which each of the entities,

individuals, and values is determined and presented as it is? To this question, I suggest the idea of *ontic technique* by which one emerges through a distinct combination of ontology, epistemology, and ethics. This technique performs at the initial stage of embodiment process as it participates in the formation of immersion. In a sense, the ontic technique may tally with Stjernfelt's concept *systematic insensitiveness* that operates by "sifting away details and thus generalizing" (Stjernfelt 2014:192; CP 5.149-50). One should beware that the lost "details" are observable either in retrospect or from another perspective.

As I describe below, Sherpa and Korean mountaineers showed obviously different reactions to their colleagues' deaths. The following discussion supposes that there occurred practices of ontic technique. Modes of subjectification (Obeyesekere 1981; §4.2) are contingent on distinctive ontic techniques, so that one attributes emerging unfathomable affect to a certain accountable authorship. And, a distinctive connection between the affect and its author, or an authorized affect, provides a ground on which emotional or rational judgments (transmissions) ensue over time. In short, in one way or the other, an element of affect emerges by having its own author in order to be felt.

Case: Death of a Korean Mountaineer

In the spring 2013, I was able to help Seong-Ho Seo, one of my teammates, to climb down from near the top of Mt. Everest to Camp Four (7,920m/26,000ft). He was seriously exhausted after climbing to the top without using supplemental oxygen, which is regarded as a better form of climbing among the mountaineers. I and others insisted he use

oxygen, but he refused. In spite of all our efforts, however, due to extreme fatigue and hypoxia he died in the early morning while sleeping at the camp. Along with other Korean climbers, I tried to revive him by conducting cardiopulmonary resuscitation and putting the oxygen mask over his mouth but to no avail.

At that camp were eight Korean mountaineers including myself. Three Koreans from other teams burst into tears when they heard the news of his death. Yet, no members of my team wept. Nor did they express any emotional or distressed reactions. Even though all of them were deadly tired after the summit climb, they tried to restrain themselves and find out what should be done next. Purna Jeon, a single female and the youngest member (twenty-four years old) of the expedition, had become snow-blind on her return from the top. This was her first Himalayan expedition. Throughout the morning, she had been unaware, as she reported later (Jeon 2014), of exactly what happened to her teammate as no one delivered the news to her, although she suspected Seo had died. Later that afternoon, the leader of the team told his death to her on the way down to the lower camp. For a week afterward, Koreans organized his funeral ceremonies both in Kathmandu and back in Korea. As the members were finally about to depart from each other and were saying goodbye at the Seoul station, I saw for the first time among the team members, tears streaming down from Jeon's face as she said, "We had been five but now are four."

Case: Death of a Sherpa Mountaineer

On October 16 of 2012, about seven months before this tragic event, Temba Sherpa fell about 6,500 feet (2,000m) from near Camp Four of the Everest massif to his death. No one saw him fall. Staying in Camp Two, we discovered the body lying on the glacier early that morning, and four Koreans and four Sherpas in my team went to retrieve it. We all knew him well since at that time there were only three teams on the mountain (Korean, Polish, and a solo Japanese climber), and he was one of the Polish expedition's two Sherpas. Also, he was born and raised in Walung like most of my team's Sherpas. The situation was shocking: a trail of blood smeared the snow on the Lhotse Face; his broken body laid at a strange angle; and, the head was almost completely smashed. To us mountaineers, more than anything else, a frightening image assaulted our senses, of being in massive pain sliding rapidly into death.

As a Korean, and as the oldest among the mountaineers there, I felt that it was my responsibility to take the lead. Thus, I first approached the body and wrapped its head with a fabric we brought to keep it from our view. Other Koreans came to help me wrap up the rest of the body.

Meanwhile, the Sherpas there looked deeply shaken. No Sherpa wanted to come close to the body at first sight. One Korean climber there told me several months later that he could not forget the scene because it was so horrible. Yet, he also said, "The Sherpas were so horrified that they couldn't do anything at all" (Personal conversation, March 18, 2013).



Figure 7-1. Temba (right) and Tenjing are in the tent of Camp Three (7,470m/24,500ft) on Mt. Everest, October 13, 2012. Two days later, Temba fell to his death and Tenjing caught frostbite at his both hands. Phto by the author.

A subsequent reaction from the Sherpas was also distinctive and puzzling. A few days after the accident, a Korean climber, sympathetic to the Sherpas, tried to console Ngaa Tenji, the team guide, and went to his tent with some snacks and drinks in his hand. There, the Sherpa showed him a photo of the dead body that he had taken with his camera, laughing about it while he did so. The Korean was perplexed. Why laugh? Even the dead Temba was "like a family member" with Ngaa Tenji, who was also adamant when he argued for a week of halting the climb because "it is the village custom that if someone dies, others won't work for a week" (at a meeting, October 15, 2012).

From my Korean view at the moment of the retrieving the Sherpa's dead body, emotion should be kept calm, whatever the situation, through learned behaviors and mannerisms. This is particularly important if one is older than others in a given situation. This approach has long been doctrinal in Confucian ethics. Also, the recollection of the Korean mountaineer apparently displayed a Confucian disapproval of the Sherpas because they had seemingly lacked the self-controlled attitude that everyone can and should learn throughout his or her life.

A similar case occurred during the 1922 British Everest expedition. Seven Sherpas died due to an avalanche, recording the worst accident ever in Himalayan mountaineering at that time. The surviving Englishmen assisted the remaining endangered Sherpas in bailing out from the steep snow wall. Noel, one of the climbers, described the Sherpas' reaction, which became controversial later, claiming they "completely lost their nerve and [were] crying and shaking like babies" (Noel 1927:196-7). The baby analogy disturbed anthropologists including Ortner in her criticism of the romantic imagination mountaineers exhibited toward the locals (§3.4); I was also reminded of her critique in my own take on this Korean Confucian-style criticism. Nonetheless, a distinctive reaction of the Sherpas is still apparent in this account. Regardless of their ethnocentric prejudices, both the Korean and the British grasped elements of meaning that Sherpas displayed through their acts.[151]

[151] Noel further attempted a sympathetic approach towards the Sherpa. By attempting to capture the indigenous signification, his approach contrasts with Ortnerian subjectivity reductionism. He noted, "Their fatalistic attitude did not astonish us. The same thing affects even Europeans in those parts ... You begin to feel subconsciously the fears that they feel, and to you also, in the deep recesses of your mind, the mountain becomes possessed of a fearsome spirit. At high altitudes these things come even more strongly upon you. With lethargy of body comes that which is worse, lethargy of mind ... The spirit of the

In both cases observed during my field research, death was a shocking event. It undoubtedly shocked both the Sherpas and the Koreans, in the sense that both had developed a series of reactions that decisively impacted the later course of each mountaineering. Therefore, one may hypostatically abstract from the later developmental courses an element of immersion that existed priorly, which embodies an affective quality that made one feel the "shock." This affective immersion had begun to emerge at the moment when the climbers were not merely in proximity to the dead body but watched, understood and sufficiently felt it. By this emergence of the immersion, both Sherpas and Koreans were "shocked" or appalled—*cast*. Since immersion is cast according to the grounding host of habits, casts of Sherpas and Koreans may not be the same. I examine each group of people separately.

7.2.1. Korean Ontic Technique

In the case of Temba's death, the first reactionary difference between the casts of Koreans and of Sherpas is observed from the Korean Confucian cosmic disposition: a couple of the Sherpas were initially reluctant to join the wrapping that had been intentioned earlier. The second immersion emerges out of the transmission of being in the vicinity of a dead body. For the Koreans, those who face the idea of having a dead body are best assumed to be the author of the affective immersion. In other words, from this reaction on, any emotional reaction towards the transmitted death is supposedly authored

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mountain, the adversary, bears down with dull relentless antagonism. That is what has to be contended with, and is what our men struggled against when they were near the last summit of Everest" (Noel 1927:196-7).

by the self, the Confucian social self. The self now would be eager to employ the Maussian bodily technique in order to keep their behavioral manners from being overcome by the looming affect. Before and during the funeral of Seo, both in Nepal and back in Korea, the Korean mountaineers and a few close Korean friends had deliberately engaged in discussions as to what extent they should have expressed their sorrow in front of the bereaved families and other mourners.

Purna Jeon, who chose to keep calm on that day of Seo's death, published about half a year later a travelogue that expressed her emotional agony. Using highly measured words and figurative expressions, she appealed to Korean readers about her own struggles to control her extreme affect. To grasp the controlled expression in the context, it is worth quoting its several paragraphs.

> "Brother, Seong-Ho's weird!"
>
> Chi-Young's sobbing voice woke me up. It's five AM. Snow-blind after coming back from the top yesterday, I couldn't open my eyes. Sounds and feelings are all that I now recollect. Chang-Ho and Il-Jin, who slept next to me, got up and went out to the next tent. A variety of thoughts lingered in my head: perhaps he didn't die; were he to die, Chi-Young must have woken us up more urgently. …
>
> Because we were managing Seong-Ho's death, we were delayed. Il-Jin and Chi-Young would leave first, it was decided, and then Chang-Ho and I would follow. Everything flew calmly, with great poise, where no hint announced someone's death. But I was able to perceive it: Seong-Ho was probably dead, or at least near to his death. …
>
> From the South Col [Camp Four] through Camp Three, there are many spots where a slip can lead to a fatal fall. With the assistance of Chang-Ho and Pasang, I paid all of my attention to each step. Since I couldn't see anything at all, however, I felt no fear. Indeed, everything was the same on that mountain: uncaring about a death of someone, uncaring about the danger of my own. To others, my death would be so, even I thought, and likewise Seong-Ho's death was not at all sad. After a few times of stumbling, we took a brief respite on the way, when Chang-Ho said,

"Purna, do you know Seong-Ho's dead? But you should go back alive."

Because of this, Seong-Ho's death became certain. It was the first "word" that announced his death to me. My face was frowned. Quiet. And, were I to console Chang-Ho, I thought, I must pluck up the courage.

"Yes!"

The response the loudest I could. …

As approaching Base Camp, a few people came out toward us from afar. As I saw them, I was almost about to cry. But I didn't want to cry in front of others. Determined, I exchanged greetings with the Dream Team members and staff members. Seok-Wu asked about my eye condition, and he said, "You did it hard."

This single word was enough to console me. After six days I came back to my tent. Everything inside the tent was tidy, the same as before. Before I departed I cleaned it, with an unsettled and worried mind. Now, I ask myself: Why did I want to keep it so clean. The last night before the departure, Seong-Ho came by my tent in the course of shooting with a camera the members' final feelings and asked,

"Why did you eat so little food today?"

"I couldn't eat because I might die."

To my gloom, his last words were this:

"Don't worry. We'll keep you safe."

Now the person who'd keep me safe was gone. I should have kept him safe.

Throughout the expedition, indeed I felt uneasy with him. Initially, he was pleased with having me, the youngest, since he had been the youngest throughout his ten years of expedition experiences; as my faults and wrongdoings piled up, however, he was increasingly unhappy with me, harshly nagging at each of my acts and words. Because of him, I had also been troubled and stressed out often. Gradually I hated him.

However, it was also Seong-Ho who always helped me whenever I was in trouble. Whenever I was crossing the ladders over the Ice-fall crevasses, he was holding the rope for me to get balanced. When I said my hands were freezing, he took off his own warm gloves for me and walked out wearing only thin gloves. When staying at Base Camp, though, he turned to rigid and difficult again. On the mountain, to me, Seong-Ho was like a pair of gloves.

On the next day, Base Camp was busy with helicopters flying and people carrying bags and cargo. In the midst of the bustle, a South American [Ecuadorian] mountaineer was sitting with his wife. During his desperate climbing down from the summit of Mt. Everest without using oxygen, he received from her a radio call asking him to use the emergency oxygen, which he elected to use in the end—so he was now there with his wife.

The man was showing a stone to her that he picked up at the top. As if willing to follow her husband wherever he goes, the beautiful lady kissed him,



Figure 7-2. The snow-blind Purna Jeon is climbing down the steep Lhotse Face at around 7,800m (25,600ft), assisted by a climbing Sherpa, on May 21, 2013. Photo by Chang-Ho Kim.

> tearfully. It should have been great for Seong-Ho, I thought, if he was with a person like her. (Jeon 2014:93-96)

Throughout undergoing that very agony, she taught herself and demonstrated sophisticated skills relating to how to live her life with such a memory. The whole of mountaineering experiences for the Koreans consists of phenomenal entities that are delimited to come under the authorship of the Confucian self. Moreover, as Jeon exemplified, the capacity of the Confucian self constantly grows up in the very Confucian

sense—mountaineering may be a means of cultivating virtues (§4.5, §5.3). In my technical terms, the ontic technique helps to design the scheme of its own evolution.

7.2.2. Sherpa Ontic Technique

In view of the tantric monism which eludes the mind/body dualism and which makes up the Sherpa cosmic disposition (§5.1), the emerging affect was repeatedly arising from the dead body, surging out from the fatal event in its tangibility. Technically speaking, with the Sherpa ontic technique, the affect was regarded as being authored by the dead body.

Sherpa ontic technique contrasts with the Korean ontic technique in the manner of associating the affect with its author. No matter whether in mountain climbing or in their village lives, in a number of occasions I found my Confucian self confused by the paradoxical Sherpa mixture of stark distress and characteristic laughter that they showed at the Sherpas' death. In one funeral, I could not help but be amazed by the joyful dancing (yet much less than other gatherings; only elders joined the dancing) of people after the ritual was done. Also, in many cases where Sherpas recollected death of mountaineers in expeditions in which they participated, they laughed or at least smiled. The laughter plays not only on fatality. For example, Sanu and Purba are sons of the sixty-eight-year-old Ji Buti, a lame woman. Both sons, in separate conversations, explained to me how a cut tree fell down to their mother's leg to cripple her, laughing.

In fuller terms I discuss Sherpa laughter as a form of communication in the next section; here it suffices to say that Sherpa laughter is a way of reacting to the looming

affect. A Sherpa term can guide one to grasp the monist rendering. According to Tibetan cosmology, what is called "la" (S. or *lu* in Tibetan) which is roughly translatable as "soul," resides in the forms of external realities such as mountains, hills, caves, rocks, wind, rivers and streams (Diemberger 1997; Samuel 2012; Stein 1972).[152] This notion has also been observed among the Sherpas of Khumbu (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964:Ch. 6-7; Stevens 1993:34). The cosmological principle of cause and effect is called in Sherpa "*le*" (Ortner 1978:181, fn.19). La may be constructed in order to bring about fortunes, such as *mani* or rock shrines, *lungda* or prayer flags, houses, motorcycles and cars, fashionable clothes, crowds of cattle or crowds of people, and the stacks of bills, not only in a material but also in a spiritual sense.[153] In short, tangibility may embody spiritual force in the Tibetan cosmology. These tangible items may be declared to be the sources of, and thus accountable to, emerging affect. The individual subject is regarded as a holder of the spiritual force, instead of the author of it.

This contrast between Korean and Sherpa authorship of affect can be understood in the differing attitudes toward religious rituals. For instance, the Sherpas of Walung are rarely solemn at most of the religious ceremonies when the village lama is chanting

[152] Based on her ethnographic research in Seduwa, the settlements next to Walung, the Tibetologist and anthropologist Hildegard Diemberger explained la, noting, "Normally *bla* (T.; pronunciated "la") is translated by 'soul,' but this word can also mean 'lord,' 'superior,' 'the high.' In human beings bla is considered the 'support' for physiological and intellectual aspects of life. *Bla-gnas* is the 'residence of the soul' since bla can reside in different parts of the body as well as in particular places or objects (trees, stones, mountains, lakes). A *bla-gnas* can also be the 'residence' of the soul of a whole community—particularly a mountain (*bla-ri* = soul mountain) and/or a lake (*bla-mitsho* = soul lake)" (Diemberger 1997:328).

[153] Tibetologists also noted similarity between la (soul) and *lha* (god). Geoffrey Samuel wrote, "They are sometimes thought of as residing in parts of the body, and also as responsible for the general good fortune of the individual" (Samuel 2012:190; see Stein 1972).

Buddhist Scriptures. For them, the spiritual power is implemented less by a human self and its devout demeanor than by the scriptures chanted. I once helped a filming project about the Walung villagers. The Korean director asked me to ask the village lama, Ang Temba (Nishar), chant the funeral's sutra. He declined this request and said, "It must be conducted only to a dead body. If not for a dead body, you must not do it inside of a house. ... But it also seems to me doing it outside of a house is also problematic, since if I do that, then everybody will get into trouble." To this, his son Lhakpa commented, "people will cry [as they listen to it]" (August 19, 2013). The spiritual power of the chanted sutra is nothing else than people's submission to the arising affect. For an example in religious rituals of mountaineering, the 2013 Korean Amphu I Expedition conducted a puja on the way to the mountain since a lama's service at Base Camp was impracticable. The puja was led by a village lama who blessed the three climbers and a bunch of lungda. However, the expedition further conducted a pseudo-puja at Base Camp without a lama. The Korean expedition leader said, "Observing a puja makes a big difference; you'd certainly feel it." For the Sherpa, however, this humanistic sentimental efficacy signifies little association to the custom of conducting puja. The team guide Ang Temba (Nurbuchaaur, not Nishar) told me, "We don't need to observe a puja here [at Base Camp]; the lama already did it to the lungda, and we'll hang it around the camp" (September 29, 2013). In Tibetan cosmology, as Tucci (1967) observed, the power of animistic agency may well surmount those crafts that humans may employ.[154] For the

[154] Tucci explains this hierarchy of power, noting, "The *lu* and the *sadak*, spirits from beneath the earth, are also easily offended and most vindictive. A slight upset, even involuntary, can call down extreme wrath on man. Then medicine is no use and the doctor becomes an exorcist" (Tucci 1967:165).

Sherpas, the emergent power would flow from the selected devices to other realms, while the ritual observers merely participate in the spiritual competition, in which their perceived feelings matter little in the work of the spirituality.

At Temba's death, the Sherpas' immersion-cast-transmission development was not identical with that of the Koreans, and the Sherpa ontic technique accounts for this intercultural discrepancy. At the moment when the mountaineers arrived at the scene, the observation of the dead body with its stark fright initially appalled both the Sherpas and the Koreans with unnoticed difference. However, unlike the Koreans who soon assumed the Confucian responsibility in the reaction cast by the immersion, some of the Sherpas, by stopping their approach to the dead body, accepted their being surmounted by the negative immersion, or by the force of la, thus seen as too "horrified" from the Koreans' eyes, because they assumed themselves mere holders of and were authorless to the cast of dread. Because the arising immersions were cast as authored less by their selves but more by the tangible object, it might have been harder for the Sherpas to overcome them than the Koreans who took the struggle as a matter of self-subjugation. The Sherpa ontic technique lays the authorship of cast immersion onto a substantialized object, whether dead body or chanted sutra.

From the Korean Confucian viewpoint, the displayed Sherpa ethics are lopsided: Sherpas are less responsible to behaviors that take place in these initial stages and more versatile in handling affects that follow in later stages. The freedom of la may lay out the reference point for the Sherpa ethics. A few days after Temba's death, there is no way to understand Ngaa Tenji's laughter other than to regard casting of the appalling force as

diminished for him, and therefore his Sherpa ethics intervened to respond to the Korean visitor with an application of Maussian technique of the body—welcoming him and "making him happy" with laughter. As a form of communication, his laughter might have perhaps meant the very solace that the Korean had aimed at.

Ethical difference is induced by the difference between ontic techniques. On the very same day when Seo died, one Sherpa asked me whether I would not continue to climb to the mountain top because I was seemingly not distressed at all. In the form of dutiful memory, the fatal accidents have kept their force for the Koreans as long as their Confucian selves continue to be, especially in the tightened pseudo-familial team constitution (§4.5). In this strictly shared Confucian ethics, continuing my summit attempt was morally treacherous and doubtlessly moot. The Confucian self is regarded as the fountain of affect and thus assumes its responsible and accountable author. For the Sherpas, affect would reach the human subject from external and tangible realities such as the dead body, chanted prayers, and being togetherness. A particular demeanor displaying an effort of controlling affect counts less for the Sherpa ethics than for the Korean.

For a final example, three years after the expedition, I met Tenjing again, the surviving Sherpa of the Polish expedition. At the moment of Temba's death, he had a severe frostbite in most of his fingers, and later he had to have amputated four knuckles of three of his fingers (§6.6). He recollected his retreating and the emotion he felt when he realized the death of his companion.

> Climbing downward from near the top of the mountain was tough and very dangerous. I was almost about to fall once as I couldn't see below a rock just above Camp Four, which was certainly the place where Temba fell. We arrived at Camp Four, but he wasn't there. So we guessed he fell. … Because I couldn't use my fingers, the Polish members assisted me to manage the gears. As we were climbing down from Camp Four and Three, I saw down there you and others dragging the body near the foot of the Lhotse face. Ah! He's dead. *No pain at my hands, but pain at my heart* ("*Haatle dukha baena ta yehi dukha bayo*," N.). (Personal conversation, October 20, 2015)

The Nepali word "dukha" indistinguishably expresses both bodily and mental pains. Temba's death was a *truly* painful experience for him, not because a colleague's death is essentially a painful experience, nor did he figure out so, but because he felt the pain at his heart. To emphasize his feeling, not only did he place his one hand on his chest, but also he smiled brightly to me. I also smiled as brightly as he did, embracing the pain that still occasionally, and yet vividly, rested on him.

In sum, both Sherpa and Korean ontic techniques engage in designing elemental forms of phenomena and forging standards of ethics, by connecting the emerging affect with its author. For the Koreans, the self is assumed to author the affect that emerges. For the Sherpas, external and tangible realities are the holders of the affect. This difference in laying the authorship of affect is not conceptual ("categorical") but ontological—it pertains to the constitution, the internal architecture, and the external network of the being.

7.3 Cast: Sherpa Laughter and Gendered Duality

7.3.1 Duality of Seriousness and Unseriousness

As I have noted (§3.3), Sherpa have been widely known for being generally cheerful, hardworking, and eager to please. Whether anthropologists or mountaineers, numerous foreign visitors have found and noted joviality as an outstanding collective trait generally shared by the population (earlier serious records include Bourdillon [1956] and Weir [1955]).[155] Sherpas of Walung not only practice joviality and work hard in everyday lives, but they also emphasize these characteristics as opposed to other populations in Nepal. Unsurprisingly, a number of scholars investigated this character of Sherpas in one way or another.[156] Existing explanations vary, including the outer-worldly Buddhist religion (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964), trade and mercantilism (Thompson 1979), affluence from the tourism industry (Fisher 1990), and persisting unequal and neocolonial relationships (Ortner 1999).

In particular, a number of anthropologists have argued that it is Western visitors' romanticization that has focused attention on and emphasized the admirable ethnic qualities of the Sherpa as loyalty, cheerfulness, bravery, and stoicism, even in the face of

[155] Tom Weir wrote about an occasion where village Sherpa girls laughing during a hard crossing over Tashi Laptsa pass, saying, "These Sherpanis never lost their happy smiles despite the hardships of a particularly arduous route" (Weir 1955:94). Also, Bourdillon noted that Sherpas living outside Khumbu were not as much as cheerful as their Khumbu counterpart, saying "they had lost the lively Sherpa happiness, and certainly they were sadly poor … I missed the [Khumbu] Sherpa's welcome and their cheerful spontaneous joy. Here the men just stood and stared; the women peered from a distance" (Bourdillon 1956:100, 102).

[156] As I noted in chapter two, the first non-Sherpa researcher who delved into their characteristic collective personality was Jennifer Bourdillon (1956). In order to resolve the mystery, she decided to stay in Khumbu for around two months in the summer of 1952 while her husband Tom Bourdillon was climbing Cho Oyu (8,201m/26,906ft) in a British expedition of the mountain.

appalling mountaineering hardships, qualities increasingly hard to find in Western societies (Adams 1996; Fisher 1990; Ortner 1989; 1999). Ortner was adamant in criticizing the ordinary perception of Sherpa cultural style, arguing the joviality is culturally constructed under the prevalent unequal relationships simultaneously within the Sherpa society and in the international mountaineering context. Therefore, she argues, Westerners tend to appreciate from Sherpa the qualities which indeed they look for, such as being "childish," "good-natured," "kind," "sincere" or "faithful." Though she admits that the Sherpas of Khumbu "appear more cooperative and community oriented" (Ortner 1989:6) than those of Solu among whom she worked initially, this regional difference is left not taken into account in her criticism. Before going on to discuss traits of a particular group of people, this kind of account—romantic or otherwise—may well be regarded as reports more of Westerners' valuations and imaginations, rather than those of Sherpa perception and personality. However, though observers may have possibly distorted characteristics of locals in their perception and representation, this does not mean that locals retain same characteristics the observers have. Moreover, neither do the unequal relationships appear in the atomized Sherpa society of Walung, nor is the "inequality" perceived by Sherpas in the contexts of Himalayan mountaineering identically to the ways in which the Westerners might have conjecture in their own terms.

Above all, the joviality and remarkable sense of humor of the Sherpa should be, as a cultural phenomenon, considered in relation to other groups of people significant in their everyday lives. Bista (1991) noted a sense of humor as one of the characteristic differences between non-caste ethnic populations and high-caste populations in Nepal. It

is the ideology of caste, according to him, which keeps the Hindu peoples constantly on guard and forces a certain ego-focus. However, the joviality and cheerfulness as a Sherpa collective character is not so much caused in such a clear-cut way as somewhat complicated. On the one hand, categorizing by the terms of caste as a worldview goes beyond the classificatory function and renders the division between ethnic groups and caste groups ambiguous, that is, it is an intricate problem whether or not the ethnic groups in Nepal under the process of "Nepalization" practice the caste system.[157] Indeed, the growing ethnic identity and practices of Sherpaness have resonated with the nationwide classificatory system for a long time (§6.3).

Moreover, not all non-caste ethnic groups exhibit such a collective character. In Nepal, many of non-Sherpa populations speaking Tibetan dialects seem not as much cheerful, jovial, or eager to please as Sherpas. For example, among the people of Langtang (a group culturally similar to Sherpa) in northern Nepal, Lim (2008) observed public accusation, vehement fury, and malicious gossip, which often drove the company to frown. None of these irritating behaviors would be appropriately expressed in any public or private settings in Walung Sherpa communities. One of the earliest Buddhism scholars, David Snellgrove, also noted that, in 1956, the people of Manang (Manangpa), who are also culturally similar to the Sherpa and many of whom were keen traders and travelers by occupation, were "the least friendly people whom we met on these travels" and were "of an ungenerous disposition towards outsiders who visit their country"

[157] Caroline Osella and Filippo Osella argued that "ambiguity and indeterminacy or ambivalence emerge as important principles of everyday [South] Indian social life" (Osella and Osella 1998), so that subversion of caste or other hierarchical premise are constantly within possibility.

(Snellgrove 2000:154). In particular, northern Sankhuwasabha where the Walung Sherpas originated is also home to several ethnic groups that are far from being orthodox Hindu, such as Rai, Tamang, Bhote, and Chhetri. These peoples may be said to be hospitable and amiable in general as much as Sherpas of Walung are so. However, the utter joviality characteristic of the Sherpas of Walung is rarely found from the lowlanders and even from Bhote, the sister group of Sherpa, in Hattiya, Hongong, and Kimathanga, two days north to the Makalu VDC. During my short visit to these northernmost settlements, it was obvious to me, amid generally cheerful and jovial moods, the people maintained a more orderly demeanor with obviously less fervor of jokes. Children were quieter and frequently disciplined by their fathers. Even cattle were carefully kept from bucking across neighbor's fields in an unruly manner. All of these conventions stand apart from the routine of upper Walung. This characteristic corresponds with an aspect of Sherpa cosmic disposition that I identified in the previous chapter as *individualist collectivism*. In the individualist-collectivist lifestyle which the Sherpas simultaneously detest and habituate in, social gathering is considered "fun." The jovial character may be further strengthened throughout mountaineering and other international tourism participations, but I contend that, though in front of tourists they may "wear masks" (Fisher 1990:125), such as keeping smiling when being irritated, this effect from the recent international relationships is minimal as long as also marginal is the significance of foreigners' valuations of Sherpa personality, in the life of Sherpas (§3.4).

To this notable collective trait, my view in this section concurs with the premise of Mahadev Apte envisioning that "humor is by and large culture based" (Apte 1985:16),

as opposed to a psychological understanding of laughter as more or less a precultural expression that serves as a universal form of response to "mirth" (e.g. Lefcourt 2001; Martin 2007; McGhee 1976; Provine 2000). Nonetheless, a dichotomous structure seems laid on most comic and laughing situations. Bergson once explicated that something comic is "something mechanical in something living," that is, a "deflection of life," thus "absurd" (Bergson 1924).

Radcliffe-Brown's seminal essay (1940a) provides a social-structural understanding of laughter. According to him, a ritualized banter takes place to mediate and stabilize certain relationships, or "joking relationships," between in-laws, clans, or tribes. Though his insight that one has to consider joking relationship as part of wider social relationship remains valid (de Vienne 2012), his social-structural framework is limited and not pragmatic. As I criticized (§2.4), his scope of anthropological perspective confined to "actually existing relations" (Radcliffe-Brown 1940b:2) fails to take into account the qualities that are not actualized. As Dan Rosengren (2010:104) notes, Radcliffe-Brown's framework reduces joking and laughter to a few social functions, such as, as he dissects, antagonism and friendliness or elements of disjunction and conjunction.

Charles Briggs's (1986) notion of *metacommunicative competence* helps to open-endedly consider the social role of laughter by taking into account its function of eliciting emotional responses from those who hear it (Bachorowski, Smoski and Owren 2001; Glenn 2003). Aesthetic consideration of the comic as such attends only to an internal aspect of the conversational situation in its entirety. As a form of *social gesture* (Bergson

1924:10) entailing a utilitarian aim-and-outcome relationship, an instance of laughter acts to transpose any occasion, phenomenon, behavior or conversation once in the midst of meaningful signification among the participants into a "nonserious" moment—indicating an unwillingness to incorporate it "into one's knowledge of how the world really is" (Chafe 2007:65). By leaving the task of delineating the broadly defined border between serious and nonserious situations to the contextual dynamics between articulator of the laughter and the rest, a culture-based approach to laughter can be adopted without losing attention to aesthetic or other internal aspects of the phenomenon.

To give an example of this play of serious-nonserious bordering, there was an interesting conversation at Base Camp of Mt. Everest before my summit bid in the 2012 CALSAC SNU Mt. Everest Expedition. I asked Nurbu, one of the four Sherpas of the expedition, "Do you think I can also climb Lhotse, after summiting Everest?" He said, "Sure, why not: After summit Everest, come down to Camp Two; stay two nights there; take a rest; then, [flagging his hand fast over his head] *shik*, Lhotse Camp Four; summit; and come down." Laughter burst out from both of us. To my question, he was certainly giving a plausible response yet in a joking manner. The onomatopoeic word, "shik," describes a situation in which someone (or something) moves fast without much effort, as if his moving hand had done. Apparently however, climbing the mountain would never be done in such a manner, and without doubt this was what we both took for granted. Yet, by saying so, he achieved his aim: giving me confidence on the certainly hard climb.

That said, laughter as a social gesture regarding the transposition of any "serious" matter into a "nonserious" prank may achieve a "serious" aim in a larger sense in some

particular interpersonal dynamics. I call an achievement of the smaller seriousness *signification*, following Saussure's (1986[1972]:67) usage of the term as one that passes on *concept*, in this case "hardness of the climb." On the other hand, an achievement of the larger seriousness, in this case "giving me confidence," may be called as, following Peirce's (e.g. EP2:411) usage of the term, *semiosis* that carries out a *semiotic* quality or the total quality that the interpreter would finally secure by making out the expression. Signification refers to an achievement of verbal, linguistic, or conceptual understanding; semiosis refers to the interlocutor's total perception at an instance of communication. In the same vein, uncertainty or absurdity that is considered devoid of verbal, linguistic or conceptual signification can indicate meaningful reference in conversation and may result in a semiotic consequence, or a *significance*, leading to a formation of *semiotic communication* as a cultural custom. For example, "keeping silent among the Western Apache is a response to uncertainty and unpredictability in social relations" (Basso 1970:227). In other words, a cultural gesture that would fail to signify any conceptual meaning may be applied for certain purposes. This seriousness-in-nonseriousness of laughter is what, for example, Malcolm Barnes, the biographer of Tenzing Norgay—one of the two first summiteers of Mt. Everest with Edmund Hillary—observed as the ambiguous personality represented by the renowned Sherpa's personality. He wrote,

> Even in [Tenzing's] puzzlement at some of the people and situations he encounters there is an element of laughter; after a pause the deep wrinkles vanish from his forehead and the smile returns as he says in conclusion, "Funny!" In his usage the word is nevertheless ambiguous: it means firstly that he probably does

> not like the person or thing concerned, but also that he finds in it a mirth-provoking element. (Tenzing and Barnes 1977:20)[158]

Based on Nurbu's, Tenzing's and following cases, I suggest that, when they employ or aim to induce laughter, the Sherpas value semioses more than significations. In other words, for Sherpas, laughter is a frequent and useful means of communication, as they would pursue positive outcomes under certain circumstances by negating conceptual meaning-makings.

To give an example among Walung Sherpas, one of the most popular themes of joking is to connect an unmarried man to an unmarried woman (or *vice versa*), invoking a marriage. In this case, while the unmarried man who is the target of the joke might laugh at it, the targeted woman, usually in her teens, would either blush, lash back or both. Alongside the jovial mood, the girl might have taken it seriously enough to become shy as it may have been a reminder of forthcoming marriage, no matter what she had in her mind. For her, and thereby for everyone, the joke is nonserious only in regard to the present, but not nonserious and actually referring to a potential occurrence in near future. In other words, signification (marriage or not) counts little because the participants do not

[158] Norman Hardie also described the curious mixture of seriousness and "chaotic" joviality displayed by the Sherpa. Participating in a Dumje festival, one of the yearly all-village festival in Khumbu, he wrote, "The whole atmosphere is always one of carefree chaos, with much shouting, and even in the most solemn moments there is always someone talking. Several dogs are invariably running round in the middle of the gompa, and it was a great moment when I saw a solemn-faced lama, wearing an eye shade in spite of the gloom, lower an arm behind his table and suddenly throw a piece of granite to strike an offending dog in the ribs" (Hardie 1957:78).
The Tibetologist Canzio also observed a similar serious/nonserious combination, as a breach of the seriousness not leading to a negative reaction. His example is that a novice drummer once hit his drum in a very unlike place, which followed by laughter, receiving an advice from a senior lama in the same jocular tone (Canzio 1980:67).

care about the marriage decision, and, by doing so, semiosis (entertaining with the possible marriage in the future) comes to the fore.

Another related case occurred during my research when, after receiving an excessively long teasing of this kind, a Sherpa boy finally burst into tears. However, no one including his parents tried to appease him; the tears were simply ignored against laughter that continued. Indeed, many young Sherpa kids—older than around five years old—would not cry at most troubling situations. Adult Sherpa males very rarely cry or *mikchyu* (WS. literally tears). So too do they rarely talk about crying. Only a Sherpa song proses mikchyu when a lover dies. One Sherpa once mentioned that Sherpas might mikchyu when no conversation followed an encounter—encountering is privileged over parting, as I discuss below. Tears, weeping, moaning or other negative expressions seem to attain little semiotic value in the interpersonal arena and therefore likely become rare. In turn, the boy's burst resentment (cast) largely failed to transmit the immersion embodied in the form of the cast. A brilliant commentator in Walung, Pasang Onggyal said about this, "I joke, so I'm happy, but you don't know what my problem is and I don't know what your problem is, but we are still happy" (Personal conversation, January 14, 2013). Whereabouts of the "my and your problems" or immersions that are yet to be cast, or cast but failed to be transmitted, may remain in question, as addressed Pasang. However, inquiring a sort of "inner mind," this "conceptual" question semiotically fades away in the midst of the perpetual joviality.

Further, the sustained cheerful demeanor among the Sherpas endures under a shared antagonism against a hostile temperament. One Seduwa Sherpa facilitated the

relationship between myself and another Seduwa Sherpa previously unknown to me by introducing him to me, saying, "This is a good person—he never puts up a fight nor gets angry." This negatively defined good personality is appreciable in comparison to other ethnic groups' general behavioral characters, who dwell in the vicinity of the Sherpas. For example, when I was staying at Chandra Kamal Tamang's mountain hut during the yarchagumba season, for no reason an old man once lightly hit my head when he was drunken. This was noticed by Chandra, then my close friend, who, with a stern face, came out to the old man, grabbed his neck and threw him out from the hut, albeit not very forcefully. This Tamang's response for my sake, as well as the old man's violence, however light, was a kind that I have never seen or experienced among the Sherpas of Walung (July 1, 2013). The Sherpas of Walung might also undertake violence, but if they do, they do so mostly in what they describe as being drunken or "crazy." A public display of anger is strictly avoided among the Sherpas.

Within the generally jovial manner that privileges positive personality, experiences of negative personality can be grave matters for the Sherpas, as they experience it occasionally in their intercultural encounters including Himalayan mountaineering. Whenever Walung Sherpa mountaineers recollected their participation in expeditions, they succinctly put into words descriptions that focused on the nationality of the team, the number of climbers and Sherpas, the number of summiteers, the extraordinarily great tips received, and so on. One interesting feature was, in the case of Korean expeditions, to describe the whole expedition many Sherpas pointed out one case or two of fights or arguments, if these ever occurred, either inside or outside the

expedition—normally between the leader, a climbing member, a Sherpa climber, kitchen staff, or agency director, among others. For them, a mere description of the case without giving further evaluation seemed enough to emphasize how extraordinary and notable it was. For example, the experienced mountaineer Sanu described his participation in a Korean Manaslu expedition in 2011. He said, "When Lhakpa, Tashi and myself carried loads down to the helipad near Samagaun village, we were late just about five minutes. Then, the leader threw a stone at us and yelled, 'Why are you coming so late!' So he and Tashi had a little bit of '*khichkhish*'" (January 17, 2013). The improvised onomatopoeic word, *khichkhish*, made it sound as though it was really just a small argument. Arguments were oftentimes described merely as "talk"; there is no equivalent term in the Walung Sherpa dialect, and I have rarely heard that Walung Sherpas use the Nepali words *bibad*, *bas*, or *chapal garnu*, meaning argument or discussion.

Moreover, this Sherpa reaction to anger is notable not merely as an instance of interpersonal trouble, but also with regard to the high reluctance toward falling into an irate state of mind. Similarly, Ngaa Tenji described his feeling about a Korean's incomprehensible attitude to him, after he had successfully helped a sixty-seven-year-old Korean climbing from the top to Camp Four of Mt. Everest (§5.5). He said, "When he was about to go back to Korea, he didn't say to me even 'bye-bye' or 'thank you'! I was very, very confused. So I decided not to work with a Korean team any more. However, things went like this; I again climbed with Korean teams like the Island peak, Tharphu Chuli, and yours [two Everest expeditions] last year" (Personal conversation, May 21, 2013).

Thus, Sherpa mountaineers extend to foreign mountaineers with whom they interact preferred personalities that value semiotic qualities. In general, Sherpas notably dislike who express negative feelings frequently. The "negative" here more or less amounts to a particularly serious nature—one focused on signification. Tashi, the director of SST and the same person in Sanu's recollection above, once remarked upon his understanding of Sherpa general opinions about three renowned Korean mountaineers.

> All Sherpas don't like Mr. Kim [pseudonym]. He is a little crazy. Every time he fights with Sherpas. Mr. Lee [pseudonym] is similar, too. On the other hand, Yeong-Ho Heo is different. All Sherpas like him. When he heard that a Sherpa with whom he climbed once died while climbing, he helped the dead Sherpa's family members, giving money continuously. Moreover, he continues to come and see the Sherpas he climbed with before and gives clothes and equipment. Every Sherpa knows this. (Personal Conversation, August 24, 2012)

Personality and ethics doubtlessly matter in interpersonal situations, but standards of ethics may vary. The preference of semiosis to signification is a privileged, prevalent style of Sherpa interaction, which commands their ethics in interpersonal arenas. This not only constitutes a social and interpersonal basic principle, but also affects the notions of the self, gender, community, and history.

7.3.2 The Grounding Role of Sherpani Smiling

Sherpanis (Sherpa women) undertake distinctive roles in their society differently from lowlanders (*rongba*), and the distinctive semiotic significance Sherpanis of Walung take on relates the gender division to the wider sphere of Sherpa lives. The consanguineous afno manche circling (§6.1) for Walung Sherpas pivots around maternal

kinfolk more than paternal groups, while for most other Nepalis normally both the paternal and maternal relationships may play important roles in much the same way (cf. Subedi 2014). This calls for an investigation of Sherpa gender division since they now practice monogamous marriage and virilocal residence and follow patrilineal descent in successions of both property and lineage (*rhu*), similarly to lowlanders. In the past, a few cases of fraternal polyandry as well as polygyny, along with typical monogamy, were observed in Khumbu Sherpa societies. In the 1950s, an estimated eight percent of Khumbu Sherpa households were polyandrous (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964:68). Unlike the societies where only polygyny is permitted, in the rare societies where polyandry is permitted, polygyny, and monogamy are usually also practiced (Stone 2010:176). It seems that all Sherpas stopped practicing this system several decades ago. An important implication about Sherpa cosmology and sociality can be found from considerations of gender roles and the transformation of kinship rules alongside the system. In this section, I suggest that Sherpa laughter, as a semiotic method that at once negates significatory seriousness and acquires semiotic quality, is wielded by, and has largely shaped the world of, Sherpa men. On the other hand, their masculine maneuver of the laughter and leverage in wielding the semiotic power are fostered by Sherpa women, as they are slightly less jovial than the men. Conforming to habits, joviality as cast is practiced in a gendered manner.

A brief review of existing anthropological studies about Tibetan polyandry may help the present discussion. In the early twentieth century when the custom still remained for social scientists more as a textbook curiosity, Edward Westermarck (1922) focused on

the economic utility of polyandry, exemplifying rare and exotic cultural adaptation to uncommonly difficult environmental circumstances. Criticizing the then widespread interpretation of polyandry as being a practice motivated by a "primitive lack of [sexual] jealousy" from a man to his shared wife, he instead interpreted the marriage system as a cultural product of the rational assessment of personal benefits which compensated for the "cost" of "exclusive possession of an individual who is the object of one's sexual desire" (Westermarck 1922:331-2).

This cultural materialistic perspective, inevitably reductivistic as it is, was criticized by Nancy Levine (1981; 1988). Through a detailed ethnographic study of the polyandrous marriage and kinship systems, economic practices, and demographic transformations of the Nyinba society in western Nepal, she argued that "economy is no more compelling of marriage, household, or family organization than any other feature of the sociocultural system is" (Levine 1988:279). Such other features included sartorial elaboration, house construction styles, and dialectical uniqueness to the particular kinship system, among others. Further, Levine suggested the practice could be explained by the significance of kinship ties produced, which "provide the fundament of intracommunity social relations" (ibid., 278).

However, in this scheme of kinship being a "structurally autonomous domain of social life," it becomes almost impossible to distinguish whether the local ideas of kinship "are notions that frame experience or are interpretations drawn from experience" (ibid., 278). This view then becomes static vis-à-vis societal structure and risks essentializing the current form to be the best model for the culture. By the same token, it

fails to take into account the process of collective negotiations that might result in transforming the very kinship system as a whole.

No Walung Sherpa practices polyandry today. Only a few older people recollect their polygynous marriage lives in the past. Younger Sherpas laughed off my question of polygynous or polyandrous marriage custom ever existed in the village. Yet, long ago it certainly was practiced, since ancestors of Sherpas of Walung had migrated a few generations previously from Solukhumbu (§2.3), where the custom was once normally practiced. This change of marriage custom is attributable to the increasing contact with lowlanders, to whom polygamy was acceptable while polyandry was not. Among the Solukhumbu Sherpas in the late 1960s, Ortner observed a slightly higher rate of polyandry than that of polygamy, which was "generally hushed up because of its illegality" (Ortner 1978:21). In this regard, I agree with von Fürer-Haimendorf's (1963:165) opinion that resistance to polyandrous marriage is to be attributed to the increasing influence of being in contact with people who frowned upon such customs, not to jealousy between joint husbands or to the changed economic or ecological circumstances.

For most Sherpas of Walung, jealousy against one's spouse's boy- or girlfriend seems in general less pronounced than lowlanders or other Nepalis in Kathmandu. This can be conjectured from the feature that more than a few Sherpa husbands engage in extramarital relationships, that many of them, largely secretly, partake of prostitution in the corners of the capital, and that the wives seemingly care little about their husbands' extramarital affairs. In turn, while some Sherpa husbands suspect their wives'

extramarital affairs during their absence, they are least likely to inspect their wives' private lives with scrutinizing eyes. Unmarried Sherpa males and females are least morally bound in engaging in sexual relationships. This does not mean that Sherpanis or Sherpas are, openly or secretly, licentious. In general, Walung Sherpas exhibit an "unpredatory attitude toward sex" like Khumbu Sherpas (Ortner 1999:221). On more than one occasion during the research mountaineering trips in which I participated, explicit sexual jokes taunted by other Tibetan-speaking locals or lowlanders were frowned upon by Walung Sherpa mountaineers. Nonetheless, a considerable degree of sexual freedom in pre- and—to a lesser degree—extra-marital sexual affairs for both sexes seems allowed for most Sherpa communities, as observed among Khumbu Sherpas (von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964: Ch.3, 8; 1984:35).[159]

For an example of premarital affairs from my field research, in company with a Seduwa Sherpa man in his early twenties, I trekked several days through plateaus and visited summer kharkas where Sherpa villagers and other locals climb up to pick yarchagumba (§6.7), staying for days to weeks at that time. On a vast, foggy hill, we met three teenage Sherpanis crawling to hunt the treasures. With little hesitance, my friend made a move on them, whispering to me, "It's easy!" Though it turned out that he was probably too shy to bring up to them his sexual intention, this case may hint at how young Sherpa adults deal with their sexuality. To give an example of the extra-marital

[159] Levine (1988) also observed among the Ninba that female sexuality is subject to little constraint. In many cases in the Ninba society, married women not only have multiple husbands but also engage in extramarital affairs, and therefore she argues that sexuality of women can be loosely shared by many men.

sexual affairs, in a conversation about three Walung Sherpanis who had recently married Koreans, one Sherpa housewife in her mid-thirties joked in the presence of her husband, "I also wish to get married [via a middleman] and go to Korea." She expressed in this remark the widespread idealism of a distant dream that was achievable through a normalized sham—forging a sort of "certificate of unweddedness" by a broker.[160] Her banter caused from her husband not anger or disturbance but another chaff, "You are too fat [to get married and] to go to Korea." Under this jovial bantering between the husband and wife, no concern was, at least explicitly, expressed about her husband's exclusive ownership of her sexuality. Similarly, divorce has been frequent for Walung Sherpas, and previous divorces lay little stigma on either male or female when they initiate a new marital relationship. In my own experience, further, in multiple occasions, I was mischievously pushed by my Sherpa friends to engage in sexual relationships with lone wives, who seemed, to my surprise, little disturbed by the jests.

In all this, one's sexuality is hard to be exclusively owned by his or her spouse, although a right over it must be officially claimed by marriage. This divergence between existentiality and legality is not due to recent media exposure or modernization but, to the contrary, because of their privileged existential structure of the self, which allows the Sherpas, by virtue of the characteristic joviality, a conspicuous gendered distance between males and females. Technically speaking, as I argued above, the sustained jovial mood resists negative immersions to be transmitted, so that the issue of ownership of a

[160] At least two Walung Sherpanis, each gave birth to two and three children respectively, have divorced with their Sherpa husbands and got married Korean men by pretending themselves having never married.

spouse's sexuality, which in many cases fails to signify, is customarily left without being labeled, by nullifying the significance of its determination.

Having this distance deep in each gendered self, the practice of joviality is gendered among the Sherpa.[161] Sherpa men are rarely sullen or hostile and yet respond jovially to an unexpectedly serious transition in most situations—Tenzing Norgay's case above illustrates well a general character of typical Walung Sherpa males. The ordinary manner of Sherpa women differs slightly. In a sense, they tend to get serious a little more easily than most men do. Toward the end of village parties I attended, for example, while arguments between the participants occasionally occurred, Sherpa women tend to engage in the quarrels more often than Sherpa men.[162] Likewise, more Sherpa women than men attempted to break off fights and calm down the angered persons—they take fights more seriously than men. While I have witnessed very few incidents of Sherpa adult men crying even throughout a number of devastating accidents and mishaps on mountains and elsewhere, I did witness Sherpa women tearing in seemingly milder situations, such as whining on about life issues and abruptly arguing with another.

In line with this gender asymmetry regarding emotional expressions, Sherpa fathers rarely engage in disciplining their children, and in my observation the reason for this is that doing so involves disapproval, seriousness, and expressions of negative emotion. By contrast, in most cases, Sherpa mothers were solely responsible for

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[161] Anja Wagner (2012) also observed a gendered joviality among the Gaddi of Himachal, northwestern India.

[162] One Magar man characterized Sherpani "too dangerous [N. *khatara*]!" as they "order everything to her husband. They would say, 'Don't be late today; come here to there; cook this and so on.' Gurungni [Gurung women] or Tamangni [Tamang women] won't do that way" (Personal conversation, August 18, 2012).

disciplining despite Sherpa fathers engaging and playing with their children and expressing genuine intimacy with them.

The practice of alcohol consumption may supply a detailed example of the gendered nature of joviality in Sherpa society. Sherpa women are no less eager to drive the collective mood toward effervescence and take a cardinal role in the practice of social drinking: consuming *chhang* (S. beer) and *arak* (S. hard liquor). It is unanimously women who produce these beverages, as they hold exclusive responsibility for and rights in harvesting millets, barley, corns and potatoes, drying and winnowing grain, husking corn, fermenting them, so brewing beer and boiling hard liquor, and, most visibly, serving them. Of course, in other villages of Nepal, too, it is perhaps women who exclusively assume these roles. However, Sherpa women take much greater authority in them. Further, the significance of chhang in the village life for Walung Sherpas is unparalleled and multifarious: a passerby should be beckoned for chhang; visitors almost always need to be served with chhang; farmers require steamed potato and a bottle of chhang for lunch; for a village festival, the host spends a considerable portion of funds as well as energy on preparing an adequate supply of chhang; a crying baby may be soothed with mother's milk but also with chhang; multiple cups of chhang should be consumed before a long journey, for which one also needs to bring a bottle of chhang to help her on the way; an immigrant may long for the village with its chhang, which is said to be so good as to never render the drinker sick; an ostracized householder might be said to make poor or bad chhang, and so on. A strong solicitation to drink is ritualized, and it is considered greedy for a visitor to drink served chhang without exchanging a series of offers and

refusals. Ordinarily, a server brings the cup of chhang to the mouth of the served, repeatedly saying "*ssye*" (WS. "drink, please"), and, to this, visitors must turn their heads away, even shutting their eyes in order to avoid seeing the cup, blocking the cup with their hands, and saying "*muthung*" (WS. "I don't drink"). This, especially for the first cup, almost always ends with the hostess being the winner.

By the compulsory drinking of chhang, the consumer semiotically comes under the supervision of the particular household and especially of the housewife. Consuming chhang makes the visitor, laborer or passerby relaxed and full. The vital energy of chhang may allow the visitor to engage in dialogue and repartees with the househusband in a more lively manner. It is important to note that the chhang involved was authoritatively administered by Sherpa women, who may or may not participate in the conversation. If no woman is at home to serve chhang, a man might assume the role of hostess with self-humiliated joking. It is therefore exclusively Sherpa women's role to set up conventional contexts in which characteristically male plays of banter may occur. Their patterned practices regarding chhang preparation, which might not involve laughter at all, enable, in effect, the semiotic quality-making.

I further argue that this grounding role of Sherpa women in terms of affective sociality goes beyond gendered aspects that are significatory (signification of chhang serving) and structural (stereotyped female labors) and attains a particular semiotic value. An important role Sherpa women play is to relate individuals by helping convey someone's "inner mind" to another. It is not typical for either Sherpa men or women to speak of their own serious emotions to someone directly, emotions being love, hate,



Figure 7-3. Ang Doma is making chhang at her house in Walung, northern Sankhuwasabha on August 22, 2013. Photo by Il-Jin Lim.

fondness or the like. The Sherpa boy's case above (teasing and whimpering) illustrates this as well. Sherpa women, however, might apprehend and convey such feelings, merely by describing someone's action or statement. For example, Ang Doma—the wife of Ang Temba (Nishar) and the mother of Tendi and Sanae—retold to me her thirteen-year-old son Sanae's repeated questions about my arrival, "When would [he] come here? When does he come?" The boy had been staying at home for three days and had to leave again to kharka to herd a pack of sheep, before my arrival. A good friend of mine, Sanae had apparently anticipated seeing me during his visit home after a long time. Not only passing on the affect that otherwise would be lost, Ang Doma also aroused affection from me that otherwise I would not have felt, when she further recounted how long Sanae had stayed home, what he did during his stay, and especially how he came and went back, hobbling, she jokingly described, "*koltuk, koltuk*," with his sprained ankle. It was not hard for me to imagine and sympathize with the laconic boy's mixture of feelings—missing a friend and struggling with pain—as I was supposed to share in her recollection (January 17, 2013). The conceptual ideas she conveyed to me imply no such affective connection. Also, the communicational method she employed is verbal and beyond gender division. Therefore, it is exclusively a semiotic achievement that I and the boy were affectively related to each other.

This relational role Sherpanis assume sustains Sherpa masculinity by nurturing brotherhood. Walung Sherpa men ordinarily engage in works that involve a short or long trip, such as raising cattle on Himalayan plateau, participating in mountaineering or trekking expeditions, and working abroad, while Sherpa women are used to manage

household chores and labor in village farms. Not only do Sherpa women convey untold ideas between men who are moving between different places, they preserve connections by explicitly recollecting memories, whether positive or negative, that might otherwise be lost. For example, the Chinese mountaineer “Mr. Yang” was one of the eleven victims of 2013 Nanga Parbat massacre (by a Taliban mob). I had acquainted with him as we met on Mt. Everest and shared camp facilities in the spring seasons of 2012 and 2013. A couple of months before his death, he visited Walung after climbing Makalu, stopping by for two days via helicopter. Hearing the news of his death, the villagers recalled him many times and reminded me how kind and admirable he was. He put a logo of his sponsor company on the wall of Mingma’s (the managing director of SST) old mother’s house in Nurbuchaaur, as he stayed the night there. Referring to the sticker, she told me, "Look at that. That’s his. And he said ‘two or three years later I will come back again.’ He smoked a lot! I cried when I heard he died" (August 13, 2013). She repeated this to me several times whenever I stopped by her place throughout that summer. The old village lady did not only convey unexpressed thoughts and retell stories to one another, as multiple Sherpa men as well as women occasionally stop by her place to chat. But she also elicited a sense of relationship with vivid emotions from dormant memories and thus enabled the vernacular history to continue in everyone’s mind.

However, this gendered semiotic quality-making extends only to a limited extent. As a characteristic means of semiotic communication, Sherpa joviality and laughter not only nullify the signification in question, but would in the end decrease the seriousness of the semiosis: the division between semiosis and signification is not absolute. The

grounding role of Sherpani joviality is no exception to this rule. In one evening, I happened to be only with Ang Doma, and she served me dinner. To her, I brought up the plan that Tendi and I would leave for Kathmandu two days after that day and participate in a Mt. Everest expedition in the upcoming season. Surprised, she nonetheless soon let a grin spread over her face. It was the only, and best, reaction she could have in such a moment of receiving an unanticipated and troubling message. Recovering quickly, she questioned me about the expedition, and even asked me to help her husband and sons get hired for the trip. At the same time, however, this meant she would be at home alone during the whole spring, she said, as the men would be on Mt. Everest and Sanae and Kanchhi (her daughter) would be staying at a kharka. Lamenting, the Sherpa housewife wiped her eyes—a gesture supposedly being due to the acrid smoke from the fireplace, yet a cultural gesture that an anthropologist would never be able to pin down with a meaning.

In sum, as a means of semiotic communication, Sherpa laughter and joviality may accomplish meaning-unmaking, confidence-bringing, community-bonding, and history-continuing. As a cast, laughter, grin, smile, and joviality in general are kinds of Walung Sherpas' habitual form of expressing immersive feelings such as doubt, loneliness, desire, pain, yearning, and sorrow, among others. Since they are habitual, casts may well be gendered. By fostering men's joviality practices, Sherpa women in general constitute those semiotic accomplishment distinctively to the men. Therefore, among Walung Sherpas, this semiotic accomplishment takes place in a twofold structural way: one, "larger" seriousness is achieved by manipulating "smaller" nonseriousness (seriousness-

in-nonseriousness), and two, the feminine seriousness grounds the masculine nonseriousness.

7.4 Transmission: Sherpa Unliving in Aging, Parting, and Feeling Pain

The monsoon was pouring steady drizzles high up on the vast Himalayan plateaus. I was dragging my tired feet to visit one of the kharkas where some of the village Sherpas spent many months in the rough hills, to herd packs of yaks, cows, and sheep. The transhumant life in the hills is in many ways arduous even by the hard Tibetan Highlander's standards. Both feet in my rubber boots were not only long since overworked but quite sore from rubbing inside of the shoes. After struggling to figure out how to deal with the pain, I eventually determined to simply let it be. Then, to my surprise, that attitude worked. I began to pay less attention to the pain which I was still feeling to the same degree, and it somehow bothered me less.

The pain was acute in the sense that it forcefully drew bodily attention ahead of anything else. The continued immersive pain, however, was "cast" to my experience as if it were a secondary effect on me of a primary process instead of being a direct result of my being "in" it. While the pain, in its unpleasant and untranslatable feeling, was no doubt felt in a subjective sense, the "authority" of the pain at the moment was marginal by my frame of mind. To wit, I found myself being an outsider in handling my body as it was being in the acute pain, a consequence of my gradual losing of my habitual sense of its intensity. This seemingly otherworldly manner of dealing with pain is no doubt an observable and analyzable phenomenon since it occurs in this worldly life. Unlike my

haphazard experience, it is a cultural practice for Sherpas of Walung, which in a patterned manner crosses an existential boundary between this- and otherworldly spheres of experience, and constitutes part of their patterned way of living, which I call "unliving." The acuteness of pain can be a subjective and habitual experience in the sense one can designate it, but it is, for Sherpas, cast to a different realm, a place for life I glimpsed in passing. As this type of cast becomes customary, moreover, their way of living at large is *transmitted* as unliving.

To give another example, Sanae once tickled the sole of my foot while tickling his own as well and said, "it does not come to my one, but it comes to this one" ("*nyela maengandak, dila ongandak*"; July 13, 2013). He meant to imply that, while my sole felt his tickling, his did not. The experienced herder was remembering a past time in his own experience when he had felt such tickling, but which he now felt no more due to calluses that had grown on his soles. Sanae had once been an inept child, as at times he was still.

Likewise, no Sherpa or any other Tibetan highlander is a good mountaineer naturally.[163] Sanae's brother, twenty-three-year-old Lhakpa is a strong man by the Walung Sherpa standards. In the course of his participation in Himalayan mountaineering in recent years, he realized that climbing at high-altitude could be harmful to his health, as he said, "Throughout the last year I had been bleeding through my nose whenever I went over five thousand meters. I had headaches, too. Often my chest got very painful,

[163] There have been several arguments of this kind, mostly based on physiological discoveries on the bodily capacity of Tibetan Highlanders. I have discussed this in Chapter 3 (§3.3) as in part of my critique of the anthromantic approach to the Sherpa. Taking more from a biological anthropological perspective, it may be worth investigating how the genetically capable body becomes a mountaineer's body.

and then I was prone to cough up blood" (Personal conversation, December 29, 2012). A couple of weeks later, he said that he would leave to Kathmandu soon with his older brother to try to join a Mt. Everest expedition in the upcoming season. I asked about his bleeding. "Maybe this time I will be okay," replied Lhakpa. He added, questionably though, that he would perhaps see a doctor before the expedition launched. The memory of falling ill for an unknown cause, as well as the prospect of its relapse and apprehension of it, may diminish in the life of a Sherpa mountaineer who favors being strong (§6.5.1), complaining little, and hanging together with many (§6.5.2) and who has sharpened little skill of sharing his negative consciousness. In the Sherpa's manner of dealing with their own lives, there is an overlap between phylogenesis and ontogenesis: Sherpa's monopoly of mountaineering guides in the Himalayas manifests a historical phenomenon that concerns at once Sherpa psychology, sociology, and physiology from the scientific point of view (§3.2, §3.3), and this phenomenon cannot be properly understood without taking into account the courses and deviations that individual Sherpas might wander about.

The idea of "unliving" catches this overlap. By "unliving" I refer to the cultural way of living that diminishes social as well as personal significance of bodily life. It captures an existential process of consciousness that oversees and transforms the workings of cognitive faculty or of psychological understanding. Aspects of experience that are unshared fail to determine significance and thus remain hypothetical and inconsequential. It is important to note the dissidence between semiosis and signification: for the sake of semiotic quality, signification of some domains of bodily feeling tend to get nullified for the Sherpa. Further, as negative sense is attached to, for example, aging,

parting and feeling pain, these and other domains of life must lose their cultural importance and thereby be "disappeared" or erased from public view. As this specific type of casting occurs in a patterned way, this customary rendering thereby becomes unliving as a transmission, a way of living a whole life. By chronically undoing signification of negative feelings or experiences, unliving becomes a normalized transmission in the face of inevitable adversities in life.

Take, for example, Sanae's hobbling due to a sprained ankle as Ang Doma reported me above. The boy had been tending sheep, living for several months on the winter kharka. He was too young to stay all alone in the harsh terrain, so the fifteen-year-old sister Kanchhi stayed with him. It was she who reported his hobbling to her mother. A couple of days later, I joined their father on the five-hour trip up the hill to supply food for the teens. Sanae was trying to hide his limping from his father and me, and revealed no pained expressions. I suspected his manner to be due to either Sherpa masculine bravado or mere adolescent shyness. However, it turned out to be more perplexing. Whatever the situation, few Sherpas complain of their pain. No Sherpa verb is equivalent to ache, and pain may be merely implied by describing a condition, as for example, someone was "hurt by a thorn" ("*chang kópusima*"). Most of Sanae's teenage friends dealt with illness or wounds without rendering adverse signs of them. Obviously, as Sanae's mother was concerned about her son's pain, it is evident that pain must be cast to a certain extent, yet Sherpas seem not so much upset by it. Or, the boy might have been too young to be "socialized" into the Sherpa unliving, calling for his mother's care. Sanae's disguised limping was not an attempt to show off but was a by-product of an actual attempt not to



Figure 7-4. Sanae with lambs at a winter kharka on January 11, 2013. Photo by the author.

immerse in or "live" the pain. He wanted to be, and was becoming, a Sherpa *man*, whose major ontogenetic habit is unliving.

One might suppose that expressions of negative feeling may be socially undesirable and thus restricted to the private sector, while the intensity and brutality of any given painful feeling are invariable. In this supposition, experience of pain is first of all biological, whereas its expression or "embodiment" is subsequently cultural. Merleau-Ponty found fault with this view—intellectualism—according to which one's sensation and perception "are capable of being specified and hence of existing for [him or her] only by being the sensation or perception of something" (Merleau-Ponty 2002:246). Pain is not something out there, and "sensation is not an invasion of the sensor by the sensible"

(ibid., 248). In order to feel it, one must "tend towards the single object" not by "the epistemological subject … but [by] the body … when one single intention is formed in it through the phenomenon of synergy" (ibid., 270). And I argue that one can observe someone's "tending towards" by investigating semiotic qualities that emerge. Personal experiences that are unshared in whatever senses, are beyond observable and thus remain as an unrealized possibility. It neither existed nor un-existed—"It is only in the objective world that this question arises" (ibid., 6). The self that probably felt the immersive acuteness so as to cast it into limping does not necessarily interpret it as "painful." Here the semiotic question is not whether or not it was painful; the notion of "pain" has little significance. In other words, although the sprained ankle might have been troubling Sanae, his feeling has nothing to do with what is meant by the English word "pain," in the midst of his making of Sherpa body.

This distancing acuteness as a mode of living the body, or "unliving," becomes habitual for a person as they constantly rehabituate in the way of life. Such an evolutionary process can be observed in the treatment of elderly Sherpas. Von Fürer-Haimendorf observed among the Khumbu Sherpa "[a]n occasional casualness towards aged parents" (1964:87). He reports that the practice is "by no means frequent, [and] mars to some extent the otherwise pleasant picture of Sherpa family life" (ibid., 87). A similar maltreatment of sons in relating to their aged parents was observed among Sherpas of Solu (south to Khumbu) by Ortner. Unlike von Fürer-Haimendorf, she rationalized it with the inheritance rule in which the elders "are reduced to the status of dependents, and sometimes almost servants, in the son's household, and there tends to be



Figure 7-5. The ill Dawa Gyeljen is lying on his yard on August 19, 2013, around five months before his death. Photo by the author.

friction between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law" (Ortner 1978:46). She concluded, "The betrayal of aging parents is thus a virtually inevitable reflex of the structure and developmental cycle of the Sherpa family as a tightly bounded corporation" (Ortner 1978:47).[164] By contrast, Goldstein and Beall criticized her as having posed the parents-and-the-sons relationship too schematically and instead reasoned this betrayal being "the result of the indirect impact of modernization" to the Tibetan highlanders once congenial in fraternal terms (Goldstein and Beall 1980:42).

[164] She called this patterned maltreatment towards aged parents as "one of the great tragic themes of Sherpa culture" (Ortner 1978:47).



Figure 7-6. "Bistaari Gaba" Chhring Namgyal is organizing lumber on January 8, 2013. Photo by the author.

As I noted above however, modernization or influence from other populations may possibly bring about results that are exactly the opposite of those reported. Moreover, little friction, if any, was observable between mother-in-laws and daughter-in-laws among the Walung Sherpas. I suggest that individualist collectivism as an aspect of the Walung Sherpa's cosmic disposition operates in their characteristically apathetic treatment of aged persons. The cases of two elders comparably illustrate this. Eighty-year-old Dawa Gyeljen had been complaining of pain in his chest for many months. I suspected lung cancer. Toward the end of my two-year fieldwork, as his illness became worse, he often said to me, "I'm dying now" ("*Aba morechha*") in Nepali, not in Sherpa. His dejected lamentation seemed to signify little to his family members, though his eldest

son, Ang Temba, who was also a village lama, carried out for him a shamanic healing ritual (*onggu*, WS.). About a month before his death, in a telephone conversation with another son in Kathmandu his old wife joked, laughing and saying, "Come here now because your father died!" Dawa's aging and dying, over his last two years, was, in my observation, a culmination of a series of practices of unliving. Even long before his bodily death, his life had been gradually losing significance to others. In his death, there was nothing "smooth" transition from life to death; it must have been a literally striking event for him, as he expressed so to me. However, no one had a clear idea how to react or "transmit" the surreality surrounding his impending death, other than depending on the habitual form of unliving.

Another elderly Sherpa man is seventy-two-year-old Chhring Namgyal. He was a quiet and hard worker, and jokingly referred to as "Bistaari gaba," meaning a slow old man. One day, I climbed down to the village from one of the kharkas, following him as he led a sheep. I had had no idea of how tough herding a lamb could be. The lamb resisted the old shepherd and did not want to move an inch in all parts of the path. Equally surprising to me was his full-day-long perseverance. Though a few times he mumbled complaints to the mulish animal, it seemed that he did not need any psychological support from me. On another occasion, a group of Sherpa villagers were working hard to carry lumber from the forest to the village. Tired out at the end of the day, I stopped going up and waited for others to bring the last load. Bistari gaba was there alone and had been continuing to organize the wood that was piled on carelessly. At the end of enduring quietly his labors, he said to himself, "Let's call it a day" (WS. "*Haring*

chungsung," literally, "It's enough for today"). He had been speaking to his own self-consciousness, being very alone. He showed little need to share his personal moments in social terms.

The two elders may exhibit two opposing poles of Sherpa personality, Dawa being talkative and complaining, whereas Chhring being laconic and embracing. Common to both are being old in age and drawing, compared to most younger Sherpas, little social attention. Aging, or living after living in good health, is therefore unliving.

Unliving as an existential and semiotic habit acquired over time may also be seen when Walung Sherpas meet and part company. At any community gathering, like a monthly bazaar, they will be busy greeting each other and keenly looking for others in the early stages of the gathering. Toward the end however, the number of people evidently decreases without an instance of farewell. Everyone knows that others are departing and no one is surprised by the smaller number of people at the gathering. This is another striking difference from the custom of Bhote, who would customarily say bye-bye ("*rtu rtu*") to one another, officially terminating the interpersonal meeting. Among the Sherpas of Walung, phrases that are used for bidding farewell include "*jyussói*" ("stay there") and "*donrdaka*" ("I will come back"), albeit used very rarely and only for particular elders in respect. By contrast, those used for greetings include "*thangbu?*" ("Have you been good?") and "*tashidelek*" (T. "blessing to you"), and these are used frequently and mostly with full delight.

Indeed, in Walung Sherpa vocabulary, very few verbs are used to refer to disappear (the root *ga*), ache (none), or die (the root *si*). Most verbs are in positive forms,

and negative actions may be illustrated by attaching negative prefixes such as *ma*, in, for example, "*ma-thongsung*" ("I can't see it"). Death can only be referred as to by verbs with the root "si," and there is no euphemistic or deferential expression in reference to death. Moreover, the root si can refer not only to death of human being or animal, but also to a withered plant, the condition of exhaustion, or the completion of available resources. Negative senses are least focused or invoked by everyday language usages.

In mountaineering contexts, the most visible labor Sherpa climbers undertake is to carry loads between camps. It is certainly a toilsome work for them, as a large portion of their payments would be determined by, especially in the case of the spring seasons of Mt. Everest, amounts of load they have carried (§4.4.2). However, only one Sherpa phrase explicitly expresses, again rarely, the tiredness: "*thang chhesung*," literally meaning "there is tiredness." I have seen no Sherpa concerned about other Sherpa's tiredness in cares; being not strong is unmasculine for them (§4.5.1). In only one occasion among many others, a Walung villager expressed a concern about me as I was toiling on a Himalayan hill, asking, "Your face sweats; are you thirsty?" ("*ng-ójyu thesung, kómbalasung?*"). Being tired evades the center of interpersonal caring and affection and of celebration of positive values.

Finally, the principle of unliving may provide a rationale to Sherpa mountaineers in justifying baffling events and unpredictable futures. As it becomes habitual in the life of an individual, the rationalizing may also become a Sherpa mountaineer's wisdom. Mingma, the managing director of Seven Summit Treks as well as one of the most experienced Sherpa mountaineers, told me about Seo's death above.

> All people asked him to use oxygen. If he had used it, he should have been alive, but he did not use it. You know, death is here and now if you're going to die. You don't need to be sad nor should you regret too much about it. Mr. Seo went to death on his own. Some people believe that the life-and-death question is in the brain; they believe that they can decide whether they live or die. So they say, if you don't go to the mountain, you will be alive. Mr. Yang (a Chinese mountaineer who was shot to death by a Taliban mob at Base Camp of Nanga Parbat in 2012) was a very good, very strong climber. But he died. You see, at Nanga Parbat, those who were up on the mountain did not die, and yet those who were at Base Camp died. How could you know your own death before you die? … For my part, as an expedition organizer I have no problem with all this. If I had known their deaths, then I must haven't sent them to the mountain. But what I am doing is just organizing, and they only requested me to do it. (Personal conversation, July 20, 2013)

Mingma's "assenting to the consequent" attitude does not question why at all a Sherpa man also needs as a vocation to ride a crest between life and death—this ethical question, being emphasized occasionally in the discourses of reflective mountaineers as well as critical commentators in the West, lies outside of the scope of their ethics. No Sherpa has ever, as far as I know, addressed ethical issues in the Sherpa-foreigner relationships in this way. "Mountain is always dangerous," Tashi, one of the SST directors, once said to me (July 18, 2012). A death that already took place should not cast or transmit sorrow, Mingma argued based on his years of experiences of many deaths on the ground. This became not only his moral but also a wisdom that might teach an esoteric issue of life to a foreign mountaineer. From his view, Seo's choice was beyond everyone else's control, or, as von Fürer-Haimendorf (1964:280) noted, "The locus of all sanctions imposed on those who sin lies outside the human sphere." No one, including

Seo himself, is to blame for the death; decreasing significance of life will inevitably happen, Mingma's wisdom advises, and it is futile to find fault with it.

In sum, significances of aging, parting, and feeling pain vaguely recede in the Sherpa lives in conjunction with time and the other: there are few others who would care about one's acute or chronic negative perceptions as time progresses. Negative immersions may be cast by physical and relatively direct reactions such as Sanae's hobbling and rolling sweat in the face. However, few social vehicles are likely to transmit the embedded feelings to one another. Finally, the unshared inner mind, or "latent difference" in Bateson's (1979:103) term, remains as a mere possibility not only to the others but even to oneself and becomes no more informative. Brutal immersions failing to be cast or transmitted, such as the late Dawa's, would be left merely as illusory.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have suggested a three-phased semiotic structure of embodiment: immersion, the primary perception that is real and yet impossible to be directly designated in a phenomenal realm, may be expressed firstly as cast, so the first reaction, revealed in accordance to existing formats, and secondarily as transmission, the second and consecutive reactions that represent customary ideas, qualities, and values. Taken into account from the pragmatic phenomenological perspective, this hypothetical division of embodiment allows one to analyze distinctive communicational expressions and their semiotic significances without assuming a certain way of objectivizing as universal. The key to this semiotic notion lies in the distinction between semiosis and signification.

In general, Sherpas are more jovial and cheerful than most other populations in Nepal, and the cause and representation of this collective characteristic have been controversial among anthropologists as any assertion of the character readily raises ethical qualms. My position on this issue is that the Sherpas' distinctive characteristic is real and not an observer's creation and that the debates are partly due to an assumption of ontology, epistemology, and ethics on the part of the observers. An analysis of Sherpa laughter with the semiotic notion of embodiment has revealed how Sherpas in and from northern Sankhuwasabha deal with affects, pains, parting and aging, among others. Korean mountaineers' reactions to the death of a colleague contrast with those of the Sherpas', and this contrast is explained by the discrepancies in their ontic techniques and in the holders of the authorship of affect, both working at the phase of immersion's emerging.

Along with suggesting as its principle the Sherpa cosmic disposition of individualist collectivism (§6.1, §6.5.2), I have also pointed out that Sherpa patterned practices of laughter and joviality do not parallel with how the Korean mountaineers practiced them. As forms of semiotic communication, laughter and other positive expressions are favored against negative expressions in ways that any negative immersions are hard to cast themselves negatively—so the epistemological, ontological, and ethical designation of "negative" owes not to the Sherpas but to the observers including myself. Aging, parting, dying, and feeling pains, among others, as inevitable steps of life, fade away into a socially invisible realm, so that a specific form of individualism keeps its construction in the midst of the ostensibly harmonious Sherpa

lives. By being less jovial than Sherpa men, however, Sherpa women often resist this prevalence of lone masculinity and maintain the vernacular histories to proceed in everyone's mind.

Therefore, when Snellgrove claimed, "It is not an exaggeration to characterize Buddhism as essentially anti-social" (1957:108), he conflated semiosis (prevalent forms of life) with signification (doctrinal practices). Though I have not discussed Sherpas' embodiment from a religious point of view, the notion of "anti-social," or "otherworldly" as popular in Buddhist literature, so far disregarded in anthropological and other social scientific studies of populations who adhere to Buddhism or any other religions, might be considered in sociological terms if one brings in insights from the pragmatic phenomenological perspective. The pragmatic phenomenological perspective is essentially social because semiosis is continuous and because no cognition can be known without its previous sign and its semiosis (CP 5.262). The crucial difference of the pragmatic phenomenological perspective from the classical sociological perspective is that, while the latter might be eurocentric in its objectivizing matters, the former is non-humanistic, that is, not assuming a certain form of objectivizing as universal. The pragmatic phenomenology meta-objectivizes—it objectivizes distinctive forms of objectivizing.

Chapter 8. Conclusion: Summary and Further Issues

Sherpas' intercultural experiences in Himalayan mountaineering can be best understood by exploring how their grounding epistemology, ontology, and ethics differ from their fellow Nepalis and foreign visitors. Both Western and Korean mountaineers have understood the Sherpas by relying on their own regimes of epistemology and ethics. Because understanding someone else's experience inevitably involves this relativity of epistemology and ethics, I devised a rigorous analytical framework of pragmatic phenomenology to consider both socio-historical and phenomenological aspects of experiential phenomena. I conclude this dissertation by summarizing what was discussed throughout the chapters and then by identifying a few outstanding issues.

8.1 Summary

The first focus of this dissertation was Sherpas' identification practices. Sherpas of Walung in northeastern Nepal use the name "Sherpa" in multiple and sometimes conflicting ways that often disorient observers. In regard to this issue, primordial position (i.e. inherent ethnicity) sustained by objectivist premises has been a major and normalized viewpoint in ethnological, journalistic, and bureaucratic approaches in the region. In contrast, some researchers argue for modernist position (i.e. ethnicity as a modern phenomenon). I demonstrated that both positions are problematic basically because of their grounding in academic eurocentrism, or a tendency to project the observer's manner of objectivizing onto the observed. To address this problem, I

introduced in Chapter 1 the pragmatic phenomenology as a theoretical framework. This framework, as a sort of meta-epistemology, considers the "cosmic," or the foundational regime of epistemology, ontology, and ethics referential to a group of people, without resorting to the eurocentric or the Korean one. The vernacular cosmic world is reemphasized and rehabitualized by village rituals and practiced in everyday lives such as using the appellation "Sherpa" in tourism industry.

Academic eurocentrism is widespread in the discourses of Western mountaineers and scholars with regard to Himalayan mountaineering and the Sherpa. In Chapter 3, I traced the contemporary discourse on the Sherpa in the West to the birth of scientific exploration in eighteenth-century Europe. The nature/culture divide characteristic of Greek and Hebrew cosmology has developed into eurocentric assumptions about the individual, namely, mind as separate from body, the body separate from community, and the community as a sum total of the mind-body binaries. This academic individualism has been one of the basic premises in the West so that the scientific trinity of psychology, physiology, and sociology passes as a legitimate and allegedly the best methodology by which one may understand non-Western populations. This "anthromantic" attitude assumed by Western visitors toward the Sherpa is evident in not only epistemology, but also ethics. Some Western anthropologists and mountaineers in the Himalayas stood up for ethical causes such as egalitarianism or nonviolence, which received tepid responses at best and assaults at worst from the Nepalis, such as the 2013 Westerner-Sherpa brawl on Camp Two of Mt. Everest. This clash between "partial cosmopolitanisms" is explained by the difference between Sherpa and Western manners in dealing with the

individual body, the group of people, the sense of respect, practice of friendship, formation of economic relationship, signification of history, and perception of time, among others.

Sherpas' international partners include not only Westerners but an increasing number of non-Western mountaineers, including Koreans. Chapters 4 and 5 examined Korean mountaineering experiences and identified their basic character based on ethnographic, historical, textual, and Foucauldian genealogical analyses. Chapter 4 showed how Korean mountaineers appreciate their mountain experiences through a tripartite disposition: Taoist idealism, Buddhist dualism, and Confucian hierarchy. Although the Korean epistemology is highly dualistic similar to the Western one, the ethics the Koreans employ is group-oriented instead of individualistic. The mountain as a metaphor carries especially positive connotations as well. A longstanding superhuman ideal is therefore expressed by contemporary mountaineers' appreciation of mountaineering experience as an asset for virtue cultivation. Moving to the Himalayas, in Chapter 5, I showed how Korean mountaineers perceive and ethicize mountaineering experiences beyond their own country. Korean individuality is not bluntly opposed to collectivism, but stratified to the members. This stratification explains why the Koreans privilege group orientation over individual achievement, such as forging the summit. In the same vein, the recent series of criticisms against the fabricating practices support nationalism on the ground of the shared Confucian ideal. Also, Korean Himalayan mountaineers' collective practices of "soul connection" was a significant part of their mountaineering experiences as it goes beyond the life/death divide. In their

group-oriented valuation of mountaineering experience, the Sherpa are considered to hold a sort of partial membership, acting as a barrier that keeps the group-centeredness tightened.

Having various international mountaineers as their partners, Sherpas consider themselves seated at the center of Himalayan mountaineering. Chapter 6 identified the cosmic disposition of Walung and Makalu Sherpas as manifested by their experiences in the urban environment and in Himalayan mountaineering. I suggested individualist collectivism, tantric monism, and open-closed chronology as representative of their vernacular social, ontological, and intentional characteristics. The Sherpas continue their migratory lives in Kathmandu by the nationwide practice of what I called "external integration" and their own "internal collection," as they have formed their collective settlements in northeastern corner of Kathmandu. Working mainly as climbing guides in Himalayan mountaineering is considered Sherpa ethnic vocation across the nation. In this general exclusivity, their customs of labor contract exhibit indeterminable, monist, and afno manchhe (nationwide factionalism) characteristics. Also, they generally appreciate Himalayan mountaineering as a game of physical strength and a social gathering. Moreover, they practice multiple wage systems. While economic orientation is obviously the most conspicuous cause of participation in Himalayan mountaineering expeditions, it relies on a specific manner of social relationships, such as duty and obligation persistent through the afno manchhe groupism. The trend of Sherpa monopoly of Himalayan mountaineering is partly explained by this ethnically induced particular formation of economic, social, and ethical customs.

Chapter 7 discussed ways of experiencing bodily phenomena and understanding other minds particular to the Sherpas. Sherpas are more jovial and jesting than most other Nepalis, men being more so and women being less in general. To consider laughter as a form of social gesture, I articulated a three-phased scheme of embodiment: "immersion," "cast," and "transmission." I also distinguished Saussurrean signification and Peircean semiosis to consider the discrepancy between conceptual appreciation and total significance achieved in the event of communication. Sherpas employ a distinctive technique when they deal with emerging affect such as shocking experiences as witnessing dead bodies. Contrary to Korean mountaineers, who habitually regard the subject as the author of affect, the Sherpas are habitualized in perceiving tangible objects as authoring affect. Laughter, with its semiotic function of nullifying cultural significance, exhibits Sherpas' distinctive practice of "unliving." Lost pained feeling and decreasing significance of senior life exemplify the other side of the coin acclaimed by foreign visitors for the active, jovial, and energetic dealing with unknown and uncertain globality in Himalayan mountaineering as particular to the Sherpas.

8.2 Further Issues

This dissertation takes a view that is rarely attempted by those who have been concerned with either Himalayan mountaineering or the Sherpa in scholarly terms. Many aspects remain to explore how topics such as exploration, athleticism, death, suffering, and intercultural communication suggest distinctive ethico-onto-epistemologies in relation to others, especially with regard to how the eurocentric ideality the sport itself

often manifests to non-Western participants. The findings in this dissertation bring up a number of unresolved ethnographic and theoretical questions. Among many others, I consider the following topics worthy of serious attention: Himalayan cosmopolitanism, international aid for the Sherpa, Korean Himalayan mountaineering, and the Sherpa's intergroup communication.

First of all, what is the nature of cosmopolitanism on Mt. Everest and in the Himalayas? In both ethnographic and theoretical terms, this question would push forward the major findings from this dissertation with a focus on the dimension of intercultural encounters. One will need to consider the encounters between different cosmic renderings as related to the mountain in a *holistic* perspective. As exemplified in the dissertation by Korean, Sherpa, and Western mountaineers, experiences on the mountain involve partial cosmopolitanisms in lopsided fashions. There are now climbs done by a growing number of mountaineers of nationalities previously underrepresented such as China, India, Saudi Arabia, Bangladeshi, and so on. The full multiplicity on the mountain, a precondition for a comprehensive discussion of cosmopolitanism, is left without being explored.

Another topic that deserves attention is the foreigner-Sherpa relationship in the context of humanitarian aid. During the research period, a school-building project was initiated in Walung by financial assistance from a Korean nongovernmental organization founded by a renowned Korean mountaineer. As described in Chapter 5, Korean-Sherpa relationships are patterned in a way different from other decades-long international aid relationships that Nepal has continued with India, China, Japan, the US, and Swiss, among others. This research investigating a form of inter-Asian connection will also

engage in the growing subfield of Asian Studies.

Another issue this dissertation provides a momentum to explore further is Korean approach to Himalayan mountaineering. My observations made in Chapters 4 and 5 ended up, as they aimed so, identifying a few general characteristics exhibited by Korean mountaineers without considering variations and recent transformations. The trend of Korean mountaineering in the Himalayas has been dwindling in recent years (Oh 2015a; 2015b; 2016). The perception of landscape and the valuation of outdoor activity can be a significant measure by which members of a modern society struggle with new challenges on the ground of a longstanding cosmic disposition.

Last but not least, the Makalu Sherpa's collective life in Kathmandu with regard to their relation to other populations deserves a greater attention as related to recent works done in South Asian studies (e.g. Gellner 2009; Harper and Amrith 2014; Shneiderman 2015; Toffin and Pfaff-Czarnecka 2014a). The semi-migrants are finding new challenges and opportunities in the capital by practicing a particular shape of Sherpa-centered collectivism (§6.2). On the one hand, they kept their traditions, including the marriage custom, community organization, and ceremonial gatherings such as losar party. On the other hand, they were exploring new arenas, such as higher education, mainstream politics, and tourism organizations. To investigate this transformation, one will require to inspect dimensions of intergroup communication and interaction in and across ethnic boundaries. This project may help shed light on the concepts of ethnicity and sociality in the context of Nepal.

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