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# YOGA TREKKING INTERNATIONAL

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## About Us and Our Mission

Yoga Trekking International was inspired by Leisha Knight, Binod Dangol, and Roshan Maharjan when they were on their way to Mt. Everest Base Camp in the Solukhumbu Region of Nepal. Halfway between Lukla and Base Camp, Nepal was struck with the largest and most devastating earthquake they had ever experienced. The quake registered 7.9 on the richter scale and it set off a series of other quakes (aftershocks) that continued to occur for months after the original. The team was in a safe place when they felt the earthquake and were happy that they had not seen or experienced much more than the earth's violent shaking. They decided to turn back to Namche Bazaar, the largest city on the trek, to assess the damage and make decisions regarding continuation of the trip accordingly. It quickly became clear that this had been a devastating disaster that had rocked Nepal to the very core. People were being carried on stretchers to helipads in the region, families were crying in from of the toppled homes, and others stared in disbelief at what they had just witnesses.

Days in Namchee Bazaar gave us the opportunity to view the news and see photos of our home city, Kathmandu in ruins. In the meantime, we were required to sleep in tents on a hilltop above the city. We met many groups who were either going to Base Camp or coming from Base Camp. We heard many stories, people told us how they had watched their friends be swept away in an avalanche or thrown onto rocks and badly injured, many even killed. We spoke to people as they discovered that their villages were no longer standing and that they no longer had a home to return to. We found that within our groups, homes had been lost as well and family members killed.

The April 25 earthquake killed over 8000 people in Nepal and aftershocks raised the death toll even higher. Our heart's were broken and lives had been changed forever. We didn't know what to do, we were stuck in Namche, unable to go help our families in Kathmandu. As we sat together on top of the hill, Leisha shared her ideas and experience as a yoga teacher, retreat leader, and outdoor enthusiast. Roshan talked about his Hiking and Mountain guide certification, while Binod shared his outdoor experience and connection to the business world. We all knew that we wanted to share the beauty of Nepal and continue to help bring unity and peace to the world and the people of Nepal through an intimate experience of this wonderfully beautiful multicultural environment. We understood that while Nepal had been broken, it was not beaten and the day after the quake people had already begun rebuilding their homes. We had plenty of food as most of it was subsistence based, and water is prevalent and safe to drink in the mountains. There were many hotels and many were not even touched by the earthquake. We continued to hike along the trail and found that in villages higher up, people were thankful to have the business and were concerned that people wouldn't come to Nepal because of the earthquake. We had a great experience in the mountains and our return to

Kathmandu proved to be much of the same. There was significant damage but everything was still functioning, businesses open, food and water were easy to find and the situation was being managed. People were the most fearful about what would happen to them due to the economic effect of the earthquake. Nepal's economy relies heavily on tourism, Mt. Everest (the world's tallest peak), and the Himalayas in general make Nepal a very popular tourist destination. The earthquake scared many people deterring them from keeping their travel plans. The people in Nepal need to rebuild their homes and without income to support their efforts this task is not possible. Many people are still living in tents today and need resources to rebuild and some to relocate as well.

We decided to start Yoga Trekking International as a way to bring tourists back to Nepal and help support the Nepalese efforts to rebuild even here in the US. 50% of all Yoga Trekking International's Income goes directly to Nepal and is split between our partners there, Binod Dangol and Roshan Maharjan. We support many projects in Nepal to contribute to the rebuilding and vocational rehabilitation efforts in the country. We will continue to make collaborative efforts between the US and Nepal with annual trips to Everest Base Camp and other popular destinations in Nepal, donation based yoga hikes will be taught to raise funds for the rebuild efforts Nepal, and we employ individuals at equal opportunity and fair rates regardless of the country in which they are employed and in accordance with the laws of the countries where we work.

Whether you decide to take a yoga class in the US, go for a yoga hike, or backpacking trip in the US or decide to go with us to Nepal, you are contributing to the beautiful effort of the Nepalese to rebuild their country and keep their culture and economy alive and thriving.

Thank you for being a part of Yoga Trekking International and choosing to help rebuild Nepal!