

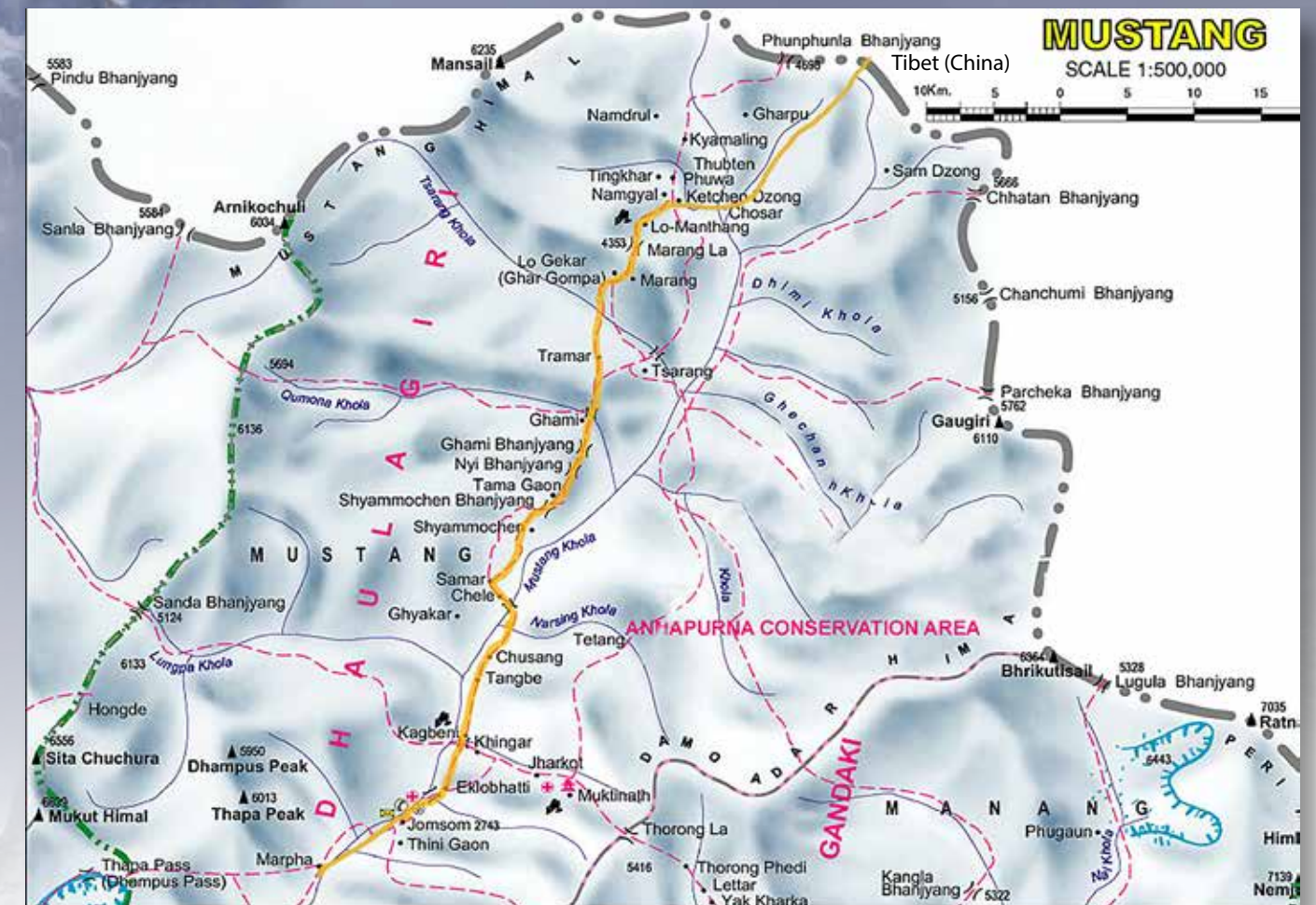
In the Rain Shadow of the Himalaya

Among the dazzling peaks of northern Nepal's Himalaya lies Mustang, a remote kingdom long forbidden to outsiders and still restricted to a lucky few each year.

Mustang, the former Kingdom of Lo, is hidden in the rain shadow of the Himalaya in one of the most remote corners of Nepal. Hemmed in by the world's highest mountain range to the south and an occupied and shuttered Tibet to the north, this tiny Tibetan kingdom has remained virtually unchanged since the 15th century.



Pokhara



Pokhara



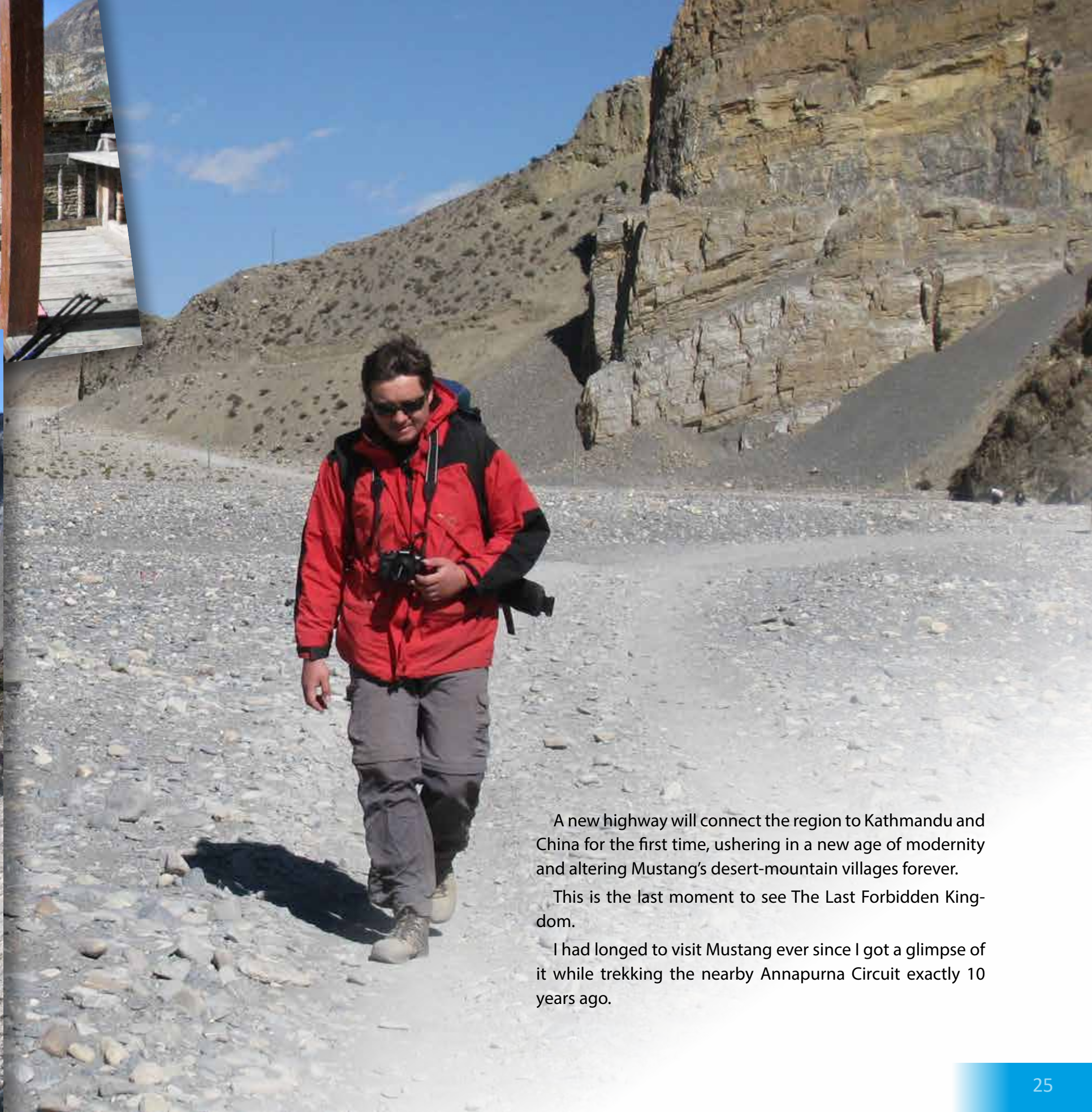
Today, Mustang is arguably the best-preserved example of traditional Tibetan life in the world. But it is poised for change.

With the ongoing construction of a road through Mustang that will connect China with Nepal, the region is seeking to regain its strategic location. For centuries caravans roamed the Kali Gandaki between Tibet, China and India, with salt, yak wool, cereals, dried meat spices and other goods. When the road is completed, it will become the most accessible Himalayan corridor and Mustang will inevitably change. Young and old, the inhabitants of Mustang understand the road's importance, but they fear the loss of their culture and identity.



Annapurna Circuit, 2008 (Tomek)





A new highway will connect the region to Kathmandu and China for the first time, ushering in a new age of modernity and altering Mustang's desert-mountain villages forever.

This is the last moment to see The Last Forbidden Kingdom.

I had longed to visit Mustang ever since I got a glimpse of it while trekking the nearby Annapurna Circuit exactly 10 years ago.

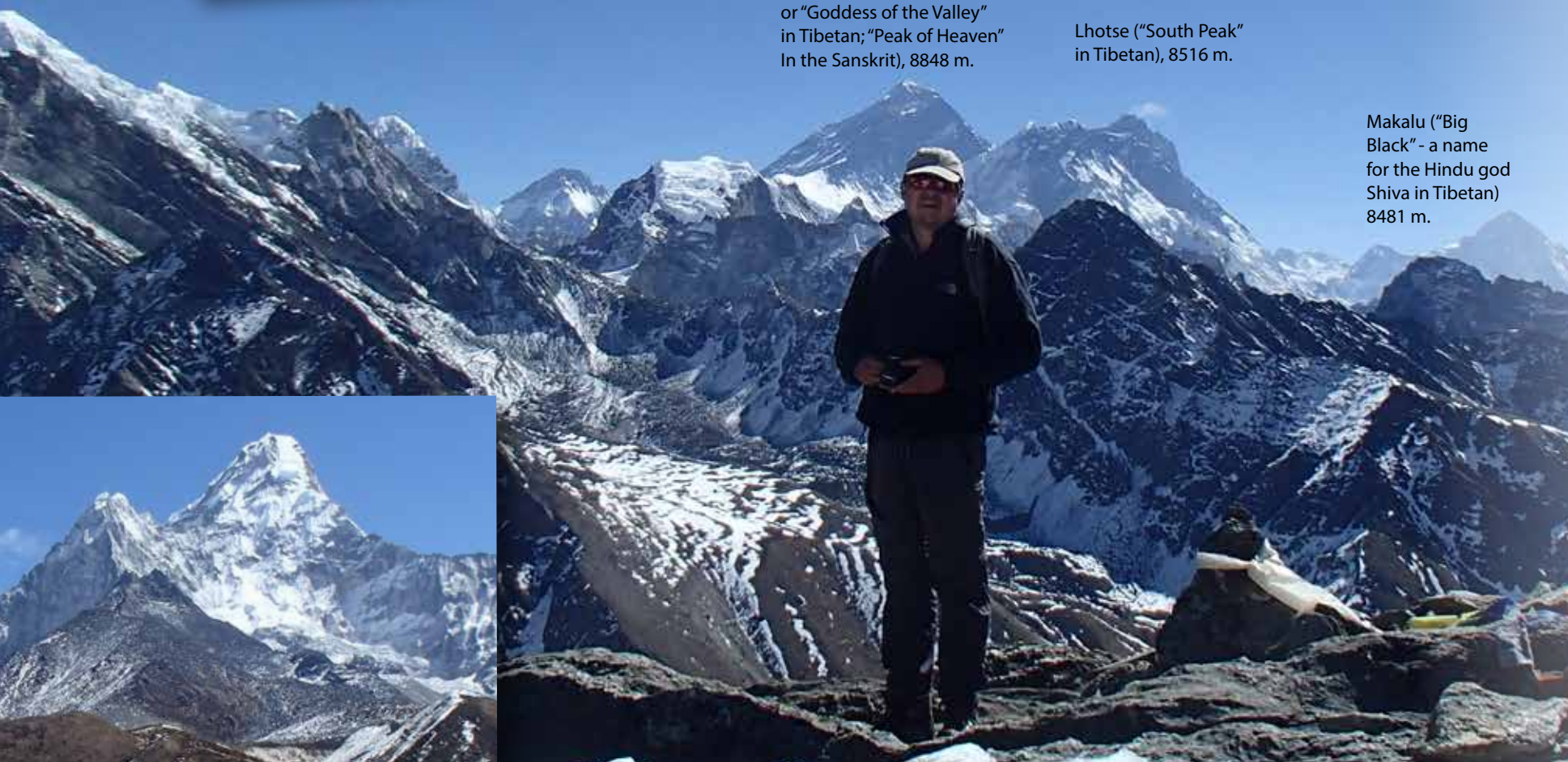
Cho Oyu ("Turquoise Goddess" in Tibetan), 8201 m.



Mt. Everest
("Goddess Mother of the World"
or "Goddess of the Valley"
in Tibetan; "Peak of Heaven"
In the Sanskrit), 8848 m.

Lhotse ("South Peak"
in Tibetan), 8516 m.

Makalu ("Big
Black" - a name
for the Hindu god
Shiva in Tibetan)
8481 m.



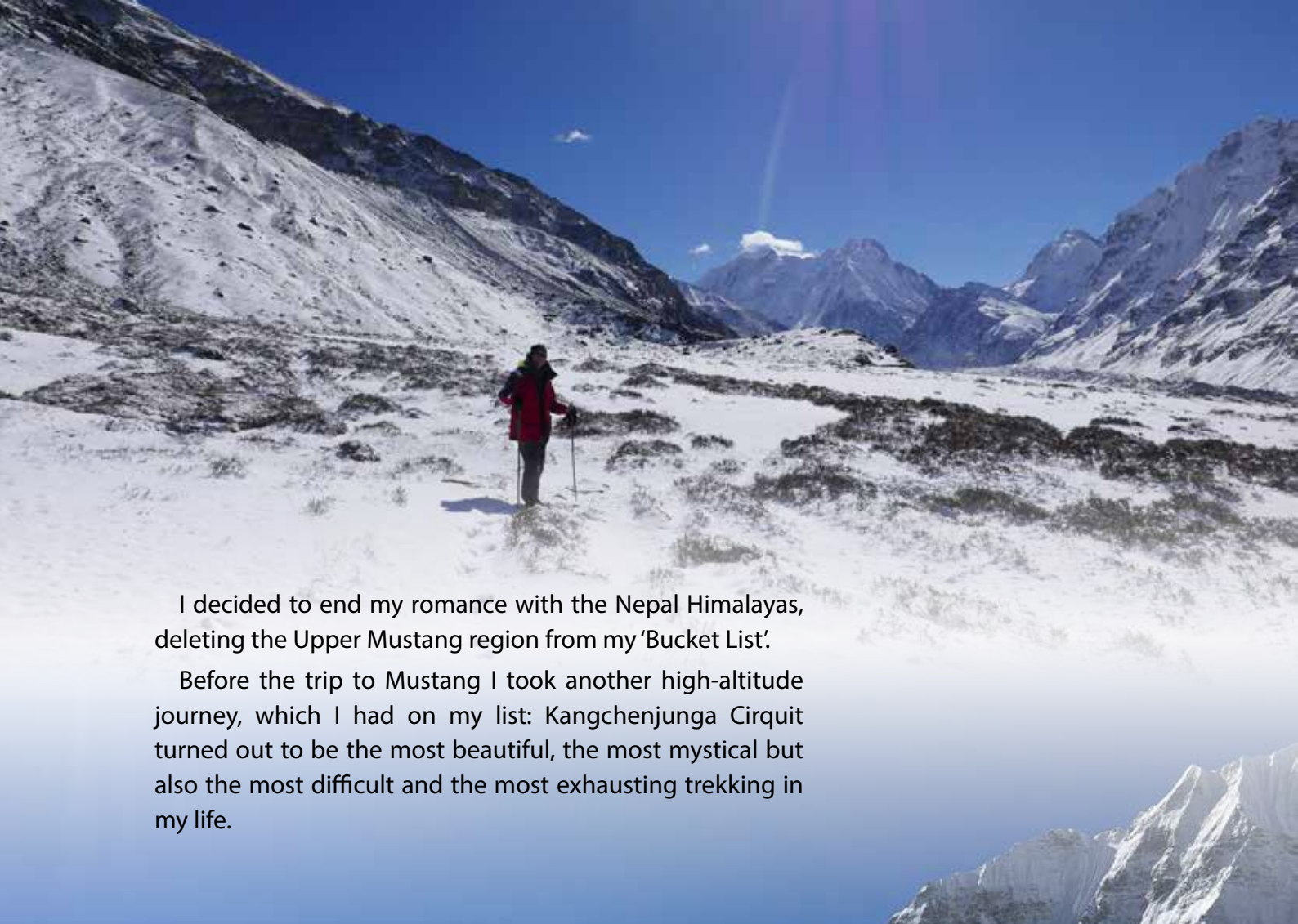
When I came back from my extremely fast trekking around Manaslu (8163 m) a few months ago, I found that there is nothing more beautiful in the Himalayas than the spectacular view from Gokyo Ri (5,357 m) to Everest (8,848 m), Cho Oyu (8188 m), Lhotse (8,516 m)) and Makalu (8481 m). I was sure that I had already seen the most beautiful mountain of the planet. - The mystical and sensual Ama Dablam (6812 m) will be forever in front of me in the most beautiful dreams.











I decided to end my romance with the Nepal Himalayas, deleting the Upper Mustang region from my 'Bucket List'.

Before the trip to Mustang I took another high-altitude journey, which I had on my list: Kangchenjunga Circuit turned out to be the most beautiful, the most mystical but also the most difficult and the most exhausting trekking in my life.



The first trip was the culmination of my beautiful trek-
kings in the Himalayas I had in the past 10 years. - I guess
nothing is really beautiful and sensual in Nepal, except what
I've seen in my life. The second trip was my farewell to the
Himalayas and - I hope - the welcome of the Himalayas by
Bruno.

I am closing an important chapter in my Himalayan life.

Bruno, I wish you, that you would love the Himalayas, just
as I loved them. My big dream is to climb with you on my
favorite mountain: Gokyo Ri!

