# Sherpas prepare to clean up Everest

With the spring climbing season on Mt. Everest in full swing, a special team of 20 Sherpas from Nepal is preparing to mount an expedition of their own. But rather than going to the summit, as most of the other climbers on the mountain are preparing to do, this team hopes to scour the peak, collecting tons of trash and other items from expeditions long past. They even hope to collect the bodies of dead climbers who have been left behind, and them down the mountain at last.

The team, which is led by Namgyal Sherpa, plans to focus on a portion of the mountain above 8000 meters, or 26,242 feet, which is commonly referred to as "The Death Zone." This section of the mountain is especially dangerous because of the high altitude and extremely thin air, but surprisingly enough, there is still plenty of garbage to be removed, including spent air cylinders, old tents, fuel canisters, ropes, and more.

Namgyal, a seven time Everest summitteer himself, says that the plan is for the team to stay on the South Col for up to a week at a time, making multiple trips into the Death Zone and bringing down as much garbage as they can carry. They expect to collect as much as 6500 pounds of trash in this manner before proceeding down to Base Camp, where they'll rest up in preparation for another climb. All told, they plan to make three such week-long clean-up missions before the monsoon arrives in early June, marking an end to the climbing season.

While conducting their clean-up duties, the Sherpas intend to bring down several bodies of dead climbers, including those of two rather high profile mountaineers. Namgyal says that they will be removing the body of American mountain guide Scott Fischer, who died on the mountain back in 1996. He also suspects that they'll find the body of Rob Hall, a Kiwi guide who perished that same year. Fisher and Hall's stories were made famous with the general public thanks to the book [Into Thin Air](http://www.amazon.com/Into-Thin-Air-Personal-Disaster/dp/0307475255/ref%3Dsr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1273027901&sr=8-1) by Jon Krakauer, which told the tale of that tragic day on Everest during which eight people lost their lives. The removal of Fisher and Hall's bodies will close out a long and painful chapter in Everest history.

In recent years, the Nepali government has enforced strict rules on the climbers requiring them to carry all of their trash off of the mountain when they depart for home. Moving forward, that bodes well for the future of Everest, and thanks to the efforts of these dedicated Sherpa, a lot of old trash is being removed to clean up the mountain for future climbers as well.

by [Kraig Becker](http://www.gadling.com/bloggers/kraig-becker/) 5th May 2010