

## Tashi Labsta

As far as the Tashi Labsta goes, that was one of the passes recommended to us by Robin to have a guide accompany us. Logistically Trauma and I planned on having a guide meet us in Thame, but two things happened, Trauma had really bad altitude sickness in Gokyo and our guide was unable to arrange a flight in time to meet us in Thame. So consequently I ended up going over Tashi by myself, unsupported. The gear I had with me was 12-point aluminum strap-on crampons by Camp and a light aluminum 50cm Camp ice ax. I felt pretty comfortable in my navigation and competence in my scrambling ability, so overall I felt comfortable tackling this by myself. Given all the conflicting info we were given about the pass, I would feel totally comfortable heading over the pass again, by myself, and even encouraging others with similar competence and ability to tackle it themselves. It was hard to get a straight answer from anybody about the difficulty of the pass because they were either a) a guide themselves and looking for work, or b) they didn't feel comfortable with the responsibility telling a 'stranger' that they would be fine without a guide.

Here's what to expect on the pass itself. Again, I've only been over the pass once so can't compare it to any other conditions other than the ones I saw that day. The approach from the Thame side is pretty straightforward. You'll leave the village of Thame on decent trail and then gradually it will fade into lighter use trail. You'll pass through some rock walled grazing fields where you'll lose the trail and then eventually you'll pick up a cairned route that will take through some talus fields. I was 90% snow free on the Thame side up to around 5500m if I believe. The trick is that the pass itself will be far to the lookers left and the correct route to pick your way up through a headwall will be far to the right. Again, look for cairns and foot prints in the snow to keep you on track. There will be a short (150 vertical foot) snow chute/ couloir to ascend, which I would estimate at around 30 degrees. Then you'll traverse on a potentially snowy ledge over towards the pass. This section was where I was lead to believe to be sketchy. In my experience, if you are comfortable traversing broken ledges that are low angle (probably 10-15 degrees) and roughly 5-20ft wide with some pretty real consequences of a slip, then you'll be fine with this section. I'll attach a photo of it for you if that helps. Once you get through the ledge (which is only about 100ft long, then the rest of the approach to the pass is cake. The decent is a bit steep and on blue glacial ice. I would say it's about a 20-degree pitch. I was definitely glad to have crampons, but the run out on a potential fall would be fast but with good run out. I didn't see any crevasses on the decent that I was worried about either. There was a party coming up the other side that was roped up and obviously being guided, so I'm sure I looked pretty funny coming over solo with some pretty light gear in hand.

The rest of the decent was pretty straightforward for me since I had fresh tracks to follow to pick my way through the steeper glacier and rock sections. You have to head a bit further 'right' than you would think to fully decent into the Drolombay Glacier. There the route follows the eastern moraine wall through cairns. There was one short section of rock down climbing that I would grade as class 3 and about 15' in length, nothing overly tricky if you are comfortable with rock skills, but a bit exposed feeling. The biggest pain in the butt for me was picking my way through the moraine fields down to the village of Na. Talk about tedious!! The worst part is there are multiple conflicting cairned routes to 'help' you through the endless up and down climbs through the moraine rock. Tedious!

Also if you check out the video I posted on the GHT, there is a brief section that has some footage of me heading over the Tashi Labsta. You can view the video on my site ([www.shawnforry.com](http://www.shawnforry.com)).



*This is a good overview of the route up to Tashi Labsta taken at around 5200m. You will find rock cairns to guide you through the lower sections up onto the snow fields. You can see the snow couloir that you will need to ascend which leads to the snow-covered ledge, visible from this angle.*



*This is looking down from the top of the couloir. I would estimate this slope to be around 30 degrees. Snow was soft and favorable, as detected by my footprints. Just behind me (to the right) is the start to the rock ledge traverse.*



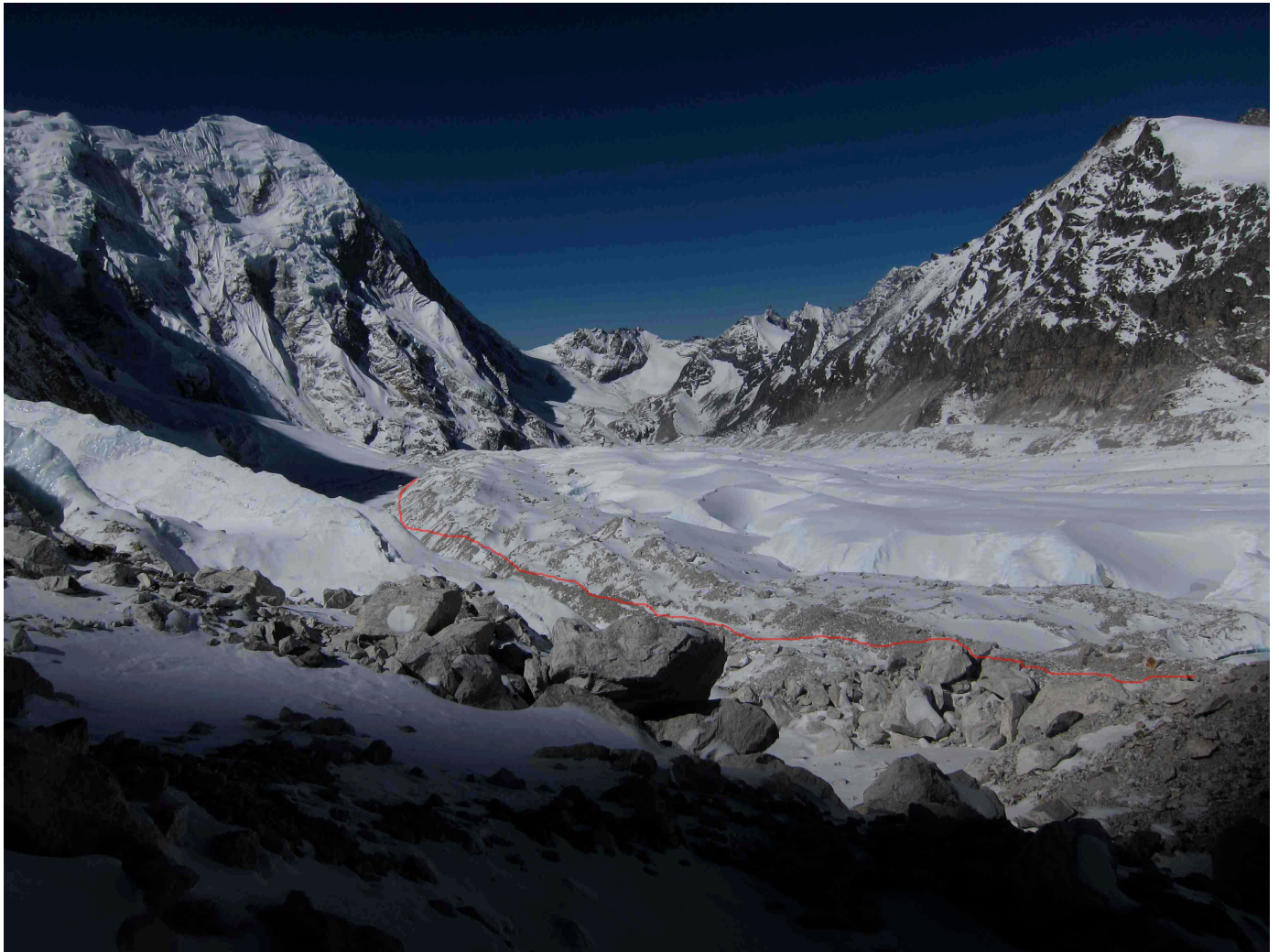
*Here is a view back on the rock ledge traverse. In spots it is less than 5ft in width. Footing is positive, but could be dicey if conditions are icy. You can see the line of footprints through the snow if you look closely. This is the section that is routinely protected by guided parties using a fixed rope.*



*Heading towards the true pass just after the rock ledge traverse. The rock bivy is just off to the left under a rock alcove. I can only imagine this bivy being used in an emergency if weather were to move in quickly. You are nearly over the pass at this point, so I don't see why you would want to camp at 5700m. Apparently Tashi is known to be a funnel for weather and things can change fast in this area.*



*Taken just after the true summit of the pass, I saw no crevasses on the descent and most of the winter snow pack had melted out revealing the glacial blue ice below. I would estimate the pitch of the ice just below the pass (to the right of me) to be around 30 degrees.*



*This is a view looking down onto the Drolombay Glacier. There are rock cairns in this area as well to guide you through. The descent from where this photo was taken down to the glacier itself is a bit tricky. You will want to head further north or “up” valley to find the proper descent. Basically you can’t shortcut the corner like you instinctually would want.*



*Picture shows typical rock scrambles and ledges after the Drolombay Glacier. There are some class 3 down climbs (5-10m) in this area with some exposure. Cairns become more scarce through this section*





*This is a view of the last crux of the descent and it's mostly a mental crux because this moraine field is a maze to navigate through! It took me roughly 5-6hrs to get from where this shot was taken to the far sight of the moraine, roughly 3 miles. There are multiple conflicting rock cairns to follow, but the general consensus seems to be to follow the southern lateral moraine viewed as the far left side of the valley here. After this section, it is a pleasant stroll down to Na. Enjoy!*