

but on water and wind. The cables are buried to avoid disrupting the landscape. The mobile phone has made its appearance, but severe restrictions have been placed on the positioning of cell towers due to their relationship with the disappearance of bees and birds. Computers and televisions are available, but the old custom of sitting around a wood fire and telling stories is still consciously maintained.

It is an interesting model for a different way of dealing with technological development, in which the products of progress are not accepted without criticism. They integrate the advantages of modernity gradually and keep the disadvantages at a distance as much as possible.

From Khumjung we head north the next morning. It is cloudy and cold. We slowly ascend through a snowy pine forest. A thick curtain of fog hangs between the tree trunks. Small snowflakes drift down onto the path and muffle the sound of our footsteps.

Out of nowhere, on an elevated embankment next to the path, a black-haired, horned figure appears. The dark silhouette of his body sticks out against the white background of the forest. Motionless, the creature looks down on me. There is great authority in his stature – a tangible presence that is not displayed. His unfathomable radiance hypnotises me and I cannot move. It is an encounter with the archetype of the horned one, a being far beyond the Earthly.

Suddenly, the animal gracefully moves off from the embankment and sets foot on the path. For a moment, it seems as though he is getting ready to approach me, as if it were a true encounter or a duel. Then he swerves away and disappears silently between the trees in the mist.

This was a tahr, a large Himalayan mountain goat. His appearance, however, transcends any categorisation. In twilight or at night, this creature could easily be mistaken for a Yeti.

Machhermo, the area we enter now, has become known as the place where a Yeti attacked a Sherpa woman and killed three yaks in 1974. Since Reinhold Messner's report of his encounter with a Yeti-