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| **CNN 10**  [A Woman Escapes Captivity and Climbs Mount Everest](https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/21/cnn10/ten-content-thurs/index.html)  Aired February 22, 2018 - 04:00   ET  Nepal. Home to Mount Everest, Nepal is also a place of widespread poverty. About one-fourth of its 29 million people live below the poverty line and that can make them vulnerable to the trap of human trafficking. We`ve reported on how there are believed to be more slaves today than at anytime in human history. This includes people who are forced to leave their homes, forced to work, people who are abused, taken advantage of or confined to one place.  And 28-year-old Kanchhi Maya Tamang says she was one of them. But her story didn`t end with the people who once threatened to kill her if she tried to get away. Her journey took her from the depths of captivity to the height of Mount Everest.  Kanchhi Maya Tamang is going home a hero. It`s been seven long months away, and in that time, she conquered the greatest human challenge of all. She climbed Mount Everest. It`s an unlikely turn-around.  Until just last year, she says she was trapped in what is knows as modern day slavery. She tells us she was a maid for a rich Arab family in Cairo.   She was exploited, she says, abused, a prisoner. Tamang says she was never allowed to leave the house without minders. She even says her passport was confiscated.  The power dynamic was clear. She says she was enslaved. And it lasted for six years.   Tamang tells CNN she begged and pleaded that she needed to return home to see her ailing mother. As sometimes happen in these cases, her employers eventually relented and she was free.  Now, Tamang was a woman on a mission. She wanted to raise awareness about modern day slavery to make sure what happened to her don`t happen to others.  If you speak out normally, it`s difficult to get attention, she says. But when you speak out from the top of the world, people sit up and notice. And for Tamang, the top of the world was Mount Everest.  KANCHHI MAYA TAMANG, SURVIVOR (translated): After climbing Everest, I want to work towards the empowerment of women and children who are victims of human trafficking.  AGRAWAL: Nepal government says it believes Tamang is the first survivor of modern day slavery to have scaled the world`s tallest peak. And now she is coming home. Sindhupalchok district is the major hub of human trafficking in Nepal. Young girls from here are often lured to work as maids abroad. Tamang wants to stop that from happening.  Women here are illiterate, she says. They can`t get jobs. They`re susceptible to being trafficked. That`s why I want to encourage them to join the mountaineering business.  A massive earthquake in 2015 has made a bad situation worse. More than 3,500 people died in Tamang`s district alone. Tens of thousands off their homes, again, making them more vulnerable to jobs like the one Tamang escaped from.  This is Tamang`s childhood school. Here, her story is already legend.  We have to start raising awareness against this crime from the school level, she says, as the students listen intently.The school was on her way home, all the way up the hill. Tamang stops again. Other schools knew she was headed this way on the long journey home.   Her story has spread. She wants the children to avoid her fate.  Finally, she makes it to her parents. They are excited, proud. They`ve gathered friends from around the village to welcome her. A traditional ritual and then it is time to settle in.   The family is poor, but Tamang hopes she will win supporters to fund her anti-slavery campaign.  She is now planning to climb other top peaks with this message: We are people, not property.  I am a victim of modern day slavery, she says. I want everyone who has been in my situation to not feel defeated because together, we can achieve big things in life.  It`s a tall order, but Tamang says she can make a difference, one mountain at a time.  Ravi Agrawal, CNN. |  |