

BHAGIRATHI – II (6512 mtr., 21,360 ft.) Expedition, 1997

Organised by :

South Calcutta Trekkers Association

1/3 Love Lock Street, Calcutta 700 019

Leader's Report

- Name of the Peak** : **Bhagirathi II**
- Altitude of the Peak** : 6512 mtr. / 21360 ft.
- Location of the Peak** : Western Garhwal Himalayas
District – Uttarkashi
State – Uttar Pradesh
- Latitude of the Peak** : 30°52'47" N.
Longitude of the Peak : 79°07'56" E.
- Duration of the expedition** : 19TH May 1997 to 11th June 1997
(12th Expedition)
- Route Followed by us** : Howrah ⇒ Luxar ⇒ Haridwar ⇒ Uttarkashi ⇒ Gangotri (3142 mtr.) ⇒ Transit Camp I (3792 mtr.) Bhujbas ⇒ Base Camp (4550 mtr.) Nandanban ⇒ Camp I (4750 mtr.) ⇒ Camp II (5207 mtr.) ⇒ Summit Camp (6200 mtr.)
- Participating members** :
1. Shree Dipen Samanta (Leader)
2. Shree Parthasarathi Dutta (Qtr. Master)
3. Shree Indranil Sarkar (Photographer)
4. Shree Shiv Shankar Das
5. Smt. Sudipta Das
6. Shree Binay Bhowmik
7. Dr. Alope Sil
- High Altitude Porters** :
1. Sarban Bahadur
2. Ram B ahadur Pradhan
3. Dhir Bahadur
- Planning** : **South Calcutta Trekkers Association** is a mountaineering organisation. Since its inception in the year 1983, Association is trying to promote Mountaineering and adventure activities amongst the Youth of West Bengal, like previous years, this year the Association has planned to climb Bhagirathi II. We received the approval from Indian Mountaineering Foundation, New Delhi after long waiting, that to without any financial Assistance.

Mt. Bhagirathi II lies in the Gangotri Glacier. The Glacier originates from the North Western slopes of Choukhamba Group of peaks, west of Holy Shrine of Badrinath, with a length of 25 kms. It is one of the longest glacier in India flowing in the North-West direction. It terminated at Gomukh, where the water gushes out of the snout at the height about 3892 mtr. From Gangotri the snout of the glacier, Gomukh is 18 kms. and the distance has to be trekked along a foot track on the true right bank of the Bhagirathi river. Beyond Gomukh we followed the lateral moraine of the Gangotri Glacier to reach Nandanban leaving Raktavatan and Chaturangi Glacier on our left.

19.05.1997 to 21.05.1997

Arrangement of Journey

On the eve of the venture on 19.05.97 Mr. S. B. Mukherjee (Hon'ble Barrister) in his chamber handed over the National Flag to our team and an wonderful send off by friends, patrons and well wishers. At Howrah Station our Hon'ble President Mr. Sushobhan Basu handed over the Club Flag to us. The team left Howrah Station by 3005 UP Amritsar Mail and reached Luxar at 4-20 A.M. on 21.05.97. From Luxar at 6-15 A.M. by Musoori Express we reached Haridwar at 6-55 A.M. From Haridwar by bus we reached Uttarkashi at 4-20 P.M. We stayed there at Hotel Vandari.

22.05.97

Stay at Uttarkashi

All of us were very busy for arrangement and negotiation with Low Altitude Porter (L.A.P) and High Altitude Porter (H.A.P.), last minute marketing, checking of Equipment, Utensils, Fuel, Packing and Distribution of loads etc. We went Nehru Institute of Mountaineering and met the Vice Principal and informed him regarding our Expedition and received some good advice from him regarding the route and all. We also collected some climbing equipment on hire from the D M F Stores of the Institute.

23.05.97

Uttarkashi to Gangotri

We left Uttarkashi at 10.05 AM along with 11 L.A.P.s and 2 H.A.P.s and 1 Cook. We reached Gangotri at 4.30 P.M. We stayed at Bazoria Niwas.

24.05.97

Stay at Gangotri

We stayed at Gangotri for acclimatization, whole day we spent by moving here and there and gaining height. We took some photographs of Gangotri Temple and Sudarsan Parbat. In the evening we went to Gangotri Temple to attend the evening prayer.

25.05.97

1st Transit Camp (TC – I)

Gangotri to Bhujbas – We started our first day's trek at 8-45 A.M. after distribution of L.A.P.'s load. It was a sunny weather in the morning. We reached Bhujbas at 1.45 P.M. and stayed at a discarded house near GMVN bungalow. The distance of Gangotri to Bhujbas is 14 KM and altitude is 3792 mtr.

26.05.97

Base Camp (Nandanban, 4550 mtr.)

Bhujbas to Nandanban – It was a nice weather in the morning. We all had our breakfast early in the morning and taking pack lunch we started for our base camp, Nandanban (4550 mtr.) at 7.50 AM. We reached Gomukh at 9.10 a.m. We took rest and had water and light snacks and got prepared for the bolder march along the right lateral moraine of Gangotri glacier. Leaving Raktavatan on our left we did a bolder march of around 6/7 kms. up till the juncture of Chaturanghi and Gangotri glacier. We reached Nandanban, in midst of heavy wind. Snow fall started at base camp at around 4.30 p.m.

Due to long bolder march everybody was tired, Dhir Bahadur took the initiative to charge all of us with hot drinks and snacks.

After having the hot drinks, we completed tent pitching as fast as we could. We pitched altogether 3 tents, 2 for us and 1 for Surban and his assistants. Throughout the day we had a very light food so we felt very much hungry at night and again the sweet preparation of food by Dhir Bahadur made us very happy. We got into the tent at 7.30 p.m. and had a nice sweet and sound sleep.

27.05.97

Base Camp, REST DAY (Nandanban, 4550 mtr.)

As per our Schedule, 27th was rest day so we got up a bit late that day. Having breakfast, we concentrated on our equipment and personal gears. We met a Canadian Team, those who had the Base Camp at the same place. Franqais-Gui-Thivierge, one of the member of the Canadian Team, explained the Spanish route they had planned to climb for Bhagirathi III.

We also shared some of our experience with them. Then, in the afternoon we moved the surroundings of the place and which really helped us to acclimatized well.

28.05.07

Load Ferry to Camp – I

We took bed tea at 5.30 a.m. Following the pre-fixed schedule we all, except Sudipta, participated in the load ferry program and Sudipta was given the charge to get the lunch prepared for us. After distributing the load and having breakfast at 7.30 a.m. we started for Camp – I. Following the left lateral moraine of Chaturanghi Glacier we proceeded towards the East of Nandanban. After walking for about 30 mts. we found “Chandra” facing towards us with its massif. Then we took a half right turn following the same moraine ridge. Our Camp – I was at the base of “Basuki Parbat”. It was a nice camping ground with water source nearly available. We dumped the food and the other material that we carried, under a big stone cave and covered with plastic. We also chosen the tent pitching area and cleared it as required. At 11.40 a.m. we returned from there and reached back to our Base Camp at 1.10 p.m. By the time we reached the Base, Sudipta finished preparing food for us.

The leader of the Canadian Team was attacked in frost bite, and unfortunately they had no good medicine for that particular attack. So we provided some of ours to give him the immediate treatment.

After dinner we had a small meeting and we get in to the sleeping bag by 8 p.m.

29.05.07

Establishment of Camp – I

It was decided in the last night meeting that the team would be divided in to two. The First Team would include Dipen, Parthasarathi, Indranil, Surban and Rambahadur and the Second Team, Shiv Shankar, Sudipta, Binay and Dhir Bahadur..

As per the programme, after taking photograph of the Base Camp site (Indranil took the photograph) and sorting the food and all we started at 8.30 a.m. for Camp-I and reached by 10.45. Accordingly the First Team stayed back at Camp – I and the second team returned to Base Camp.

We completed tent pitching with the help of the second team and after they departed we sat for discussion about next days programme. Ram Bahadur took the charge of cooking food and prepared a nice dinner for us. We went early bed that night.

30.05.97

Load Ferry to Camp – II

Load ferry to Camp – II – By 8.10 a.m. we got ready with the load for Camp II. From Camp – I apparently, the distance seems like, would not be more than 45 mts walk. Basically we gassed that. But as we started walking we found, the big humps which were not at all visible from Camp – I. It took around four hours to reach Camp – II. After dumping load, within 30 mts. we started for Camp – I at 12.20 a.m. By the time we returned Camp – I. The second team had already reached the place and they did welcome us with hot drinks which we were really looking for. They also got the lunch ready for us. After lunch we got together for a full team discussion. It was a heavy snow fall outside so we all get in to one big tent and chatted and listened music till 8.00 p.m.

31.05.97

Establishment of Camp – II

The First Team got ready with their personal and team load for Camp – II after having breakfast at 8.00 a.m. and Binay and Dhirbahadur accompanied, to help to ferry load up to Camp – II. We reached the spot by 11.30 and in the mean time the weather turned bad. Binay and Dhir Bahadur started for Camp – I at 11:55. Binay was very much enthusiastic and he devoted his level best in the load ferry and other programme as and when it was instructed by me. So he was advised to take rest the next day. It was quiet predictable that the weather condition will not be good in the next few days, so we may have to stay for more than the schedule. So I asked Binay and Dhir to fetch some more food for us from Camp – I. At around 12.00 a.m. snow fall started and continued till 5.30 p.m. Though in the high altitude snow fall is quiet common but the overall weather condition was very

much different. It was all time cloudy, every time hallow around the Sun also made very much panicky. We completed tent pitching before the snow fall started.

01.06.97

Load Ferry to Summit Camp

It was a horrible night we had on 31st May. Temperature was much below the frizzing level, around -15° . We could not have a sound sleep. It was a shiny morning and Surban came with a smiling face with tea for us at 6.00 a.m. We started for **Summit Camp** for load ferry at 8.15 a.m.

Our route was planned like this. Initially we will start through the East face of the peak and after that we will negotiate the North-East ridge of the mountain. It was a snow march (somewhere ankle and some where knee deep) for about two hours and a rock march for an hour. For the rest it was a mixture of snow and rock. The gradient was varying from 45° to 70° . Indranil started getting vomiting tendency and he was not in a condition to take any further strain. So we didn't take any risk but got ourselves roped up and climbed up to a comparatively plain surface. After dumping load at that place we returned to Camp – II. We had a heavy lunch at Camp – II which Ram Bahadur had already prepared for us.

02.06.97

Establishment of Summit Camp

We had comparatively a better sleep last night, reason was nothing but good acclimatization. Even though the weather condition was not fully in favour, we were proceeding more or less very smoothly. But we got broke when Indranil brought in to notice that one of his finger has got attacked in Chill Ben. We took no time but took decision to send him back to Camp – I. Along with the letter addressed to experienced Shiv Shankar to take necessary steps, I sent Indranil to lower Camp. The team became smaller.

After dismantling the tents and taking all loads we followed the same route we went the previous day at around 8.30 a.m. Till the spot we dumped load the last day the route was all well marked so we found no such difficulty till that point. Again the weather condition was turning bad.

We were feeling the absence of Indranil all the way. From the last day's dumping point the load added with the existing so the speed become slower and it took 45 mts. more to reach the **Summit Camp**. In midst of medium snow fall we reached the destination at 2.10 p.m.

The gradient of the tent pitching spot was around 30° , so it was very difficult to pitch the tent. Me and Partha started biting the spot and ultimately could arrange a half of a required space. Somehow we managed to sleep that night. We took early bed that night.

03.06.97

Stay at Summit Camp

As per the plan we were supposed to go for rekki towards the Summit and do the necessary rope fixing that day.

Though it was a shiny morning, just after an hour it became totally gloomy. Heavy snow fall, strong wind, poor visibility and anything and everything against good climbing condition were present that time.

We had no way but to stay inside the tent and do planning for the next day.

04.06.97

Return from Summit Camp to Camp – I

It was the repetition of the previous morning. Bright Sun Shine for one hour in the morning and they ended with heavy snow fall. We took the photograph of Basuki and Sudarshan and the point we reached in the expedition.

It was decided in the last night that if require we will stay another one or two days for the good weather. We had enough food so these much time we can afford.

But we had no other way but to abandon the expedition when Ram Bahadur reported that he had also been attacked by chill ben. He showed one of his finger turned blue.

In this situation, neither we could leave Rambahadur alone to go to lower camp nor we could keep him with us.

So in midst of heavy snowfall and poor visibility we dismantled our Tents and after packing, started for Camp – I at 9.00 a.m.

- iv) Tata Tea Limited.
- v) Shanti Hosiery.
- vi) Mr. O. K. Majumdar.

G. For Lone :
Club Members.

DIPEN SAMANTA

Leader,

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