

--- DISCIPLINE. DUTY. DETERMINATION. DESIRE TO SERVE. ---

THE MOUNTAIN WARRIOR

★
The Autobiography of
Master Dr. Ashok Kumar Lenka

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A Journey Through
Taekwondo Martial Arts,
Military Service, Mountaineering
and Nation Building

From Self-Discipline
to Nation Building –
A Warrior's Journey
for a Greater Purpose.



TAEKWONDO
MARTIAL ARTS



MILITARY
SERVICE



MOUNTAINEERING
ADVENTURES



NATION
BUILDING



राष्ट्र भक्ति खेल से शक्ति
RASHTRA BHAKTI KHEL SE SHAKTI



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Foreword

Martial arts have never been confined to the walls of a dojo or the boundaries of a competition arena. Their true essence lies in the cultivation of discipline, courage, humility, wisdom, and service to humanity. Throughout history, great masters have sought knowledge not only through rigorous physical training but also through solitude, meditation, and communion with nature. The mountains have long been regarded as sacred places where these qualities are refined and tested.

It is within this timeless tradition that Dr. Ashok Kumar Lenka presents *Martial Arts in Mountain: 1998–2008*. This work is far more than a memoir. It is the account of a martial artist who sought to understand the deeper purpose of martial practice beyond techniques, ranks, medals, and tournaments. It chronicles a decade of learning, endurance, exploration, and personal transformation amidst some of nature's most demanding environments.

One of the greatest strengths of this book is its recognition of the inseparable relationship between physical discipline and philosophical understanding. Dr. Lenka reminds us that martial arts are not merely methods of combat but lifelong paths of self-discovery. His experiences demonstrate that true mastery is measured not by the ability to overcome an opponent, but by the ability to overcome one's own fear, ego, anger, and limitations.

This journey would not have been possible without the guidance of his revered Guru, Acharya Babu T. Ragu, whose vision introduced him to the concept of martial arts in the mountains and encouraged him to look beyond the technical aspects of Taekwondo. Under his Guru's guidance, martial arts became an exploration of Buddhist philosophy, meditation, inner discipline, and the timeless wisdom preserved in the Himalayan traditions. The respect and gratitude expressed throughout these pages are a testament to the sacred bond between Guru and disciple—a relationship that has sustained martial traditions across generations.

The book also pays tribute to the enduring influence of Guru Bodhidharma, whose legacy continues to inspire martial artists around the world, and to the great Himalayan spiritual practitioners whose lives exemplified extraordinary endurance, contemplation, and inner strength. Rather than presenting these traditions as mere historical curiosities, Dr. Lenka explores how their principles remain relevant to modern practitioners seeking balance between physical excellence and spiritual growth. Readers will discover not only stories of mountain expeditions and demanding training but also reflections on leadership, perseverance, humility, patriotism, and service. The lessons shared in these pages extend well beyond martial arts. They offer guidance for anyone striving to meet life's challenges with courage and integrity.

As a retired serviceman, an international martial artist, an accomplished instructor, and a lifelong student of martial philosophy, Dr. Ashok Kumar Lenka has devoted his life to empowering others through discipline and education. His journey demonstrates that martial arts, when practised with sincerity, become instruments for building stronger individuals, stronger communities, and ultimately a stronger nation.

I commend this book to martial artists, military personnel, adventurers, educators, researchers, and all seekers of wisdom. It serves as both an inspiring personal narrative and a thoughtful reflection on the enduring values that have shaped martial traditions for centuries.

May every reader who opens these pages discover not only the mountains described within, but also the courage to climb the mountains that exist within themselves.

"The highest summit is not conquered by strength alone, but by discipline, humility, wisdom, and unwavering perseverance."

With best wishes for the continued success of this remarkable work.

Preface

The mountains have always stood as eternal symbols of strength, endurance, silence, and enlightenment. For a martial artist, they represent far more than physical landscapes—they embody the path of discipline, resilience, self-mastery, and spiritual awakening. This book, *Martial Arts in Mountain: 1998–2008*, chronicles a remarkable decade of my journey through the mountains, where martial arts gradually evolved from a system of physical techniques into a profound way of life.

Before anything else, I bow in deep gratitude to my revered Guru, **Acharya Babu T. Ragu**, whose wisdom transformed the course of my martial arts journey. It was he who first introduced me to the concept of **Martial Arts in the Mountains**. Under his guidance, what began as dedicated training in Taekwondo gradually expanded into an exploration of the deeper dimensions of martial philosophy. He encouraged me to look beyond competition, beyond physical excellence, and to seek the timeless principles that unite body, mind, energy, and consciousness. His teachings inspired me to understand that martial arts are not merely systems of combat but pathways to self-realization and harmonious living.

Initially, my practice centred on Taekwondo—its discipline, techniques, forms, and fighting spirit. However, as my understanding matured, I was introduced to the esoteric aspects of martial philosophy through the profound teachings of Buddhist thought. This opened an entirely new perspective, where martial training became inseparable from meditation, mindfulness, compassion, ethical conduct, and inner transformation. The philosophical roots of this journey naturally led me to the ancient traditions associated with **Guru Bodhidharma**, the Indian Buddhist monk who, according to long-standing tradition, carried the teachings of Dhyana (Zen) Buddhism to China and whose legacy has become deeply connected with the evolution of martial discipline at the Shaolin Monastery. Whether viewed historically or symbolically, Bodhidharma represents the union of meditation, discipline, and physical cultivation—a philosophy that continues to inspire martial artists across the world.

As Buddhism spread across the Himalayas, these traditions evolved further within the mystical environments of Tibetan monasteries. Great masters such as **Jetsun Milarepa**, revered for his extraordinary spiritual attainment, and the accomplished **Naljorpas** (masters of yogic practice) demonstrated that the highest martial achievement lies not in defeating others but in mastering oneself. Within the secluded monasteries and caves of the Himalayan ranges, practitioners cultivated extraordinary endurance through meditation, breath control, yogic disciplines, internal energy cultivation, and rigorous physical practices adapted to extreme altitudes. These sacred environments became living laboratories where physical resilience merged with spiritual realization.

Inspired by these traditions, my own experiences between 1998 and 2008 took me into mountainous regions where every ascent became a lesson in perseverance, every challenge strengthened character, and every moment of solitude revealed deeper dimensions of martial practice. Training in harsh climates, remote locations, and high-altitude conditions demanded far more than physical strength—it required patience, humility, courage, and unwavering faith. This book is not intended merely as a record of training methods or adventurous expeditions. Rather, it is a reflection on how the mountains shaped my understanding of martial arts and how martial arts, in turn, transformed my understanding of life. The experiences recorded in these pages reaffirm my belief that the highest purpose of martial arts is not victory over an opponent but victory over fear, ego, ignorance, and limitation.

I dedicate this work with profound respect to my Guru, **Acharya Babu T. Ragu**, whose vision opened the gateway to this extraordinary journey. Whatever understanding I have gained of martial arts beyond physical techniques owes its foundation to his guidance, encouragement, and unwavering faith in my potential. I also express my deepest gratitude to my teachers, fellow practitioners, students, friends, and countless companions who walked beside me throughout this decade. Every interaction enriched my understanding, every challenge strengthened my resolve, and every mountain became a silent teacher whose lessons remain with me to this day.

May this book inspire martial artists, adventurers, seekers, and readers to discover that the true mountain is not merely one that rises before us—it is the one we must climb within ourselves. Through discipline, humility, wisdom, and compassionate action, every individual has the capacity to ascend toward higher consciousness and a life of purpose.

Dr. Ashok Kumar Lenka

Martial Artist • Teacher • Soldier • Explorer • Student of the Himalayan Martial Tradition

Acknowledgements

Every meaningful journey is shaped by the guidance, encouragement, and blessings of countless individuals. Although this book bears my name as its author, it is truly the collective outcome of many teachers, mentors, friends, students, colleagues, and well-wishers who have inspired and supported me throughout my life. It is with profound humility and heartfelt gratitude that I acknowledge them.

My deepest and most reverential gratitude goes to my beloved Guru, **Acharya Babu T. Ragu**, whose vision transformed my understanding of martial arts. It was he who introduced me to the concept of *Martial Arts in the Mountains*, opening before me a path that extended far beyond the physical techniques of Taekwondo. Under his guidance, I began exploring the profound relationship between martial discipline, Buddhist philosophy, meditation, Himalayan traditions, and the inner journey of self-realisation. His wisdom, encouragement, and unwavering faith became the foundation upon which this entire work has been built. Whatever understanding I have gained of the deeper dimensions of martial arts is a reflection of his teachings.

I offer my respectful homage to the ancient lineage of martial and spiritual masters whose wisdom continues to inspire generations. I bow to **Guru Bodhidharma**, whose enduring legacy symbolises the union of meditation, discipline, and physical cultivation. I also pay tribute to the great Himalayan yogis, especially **Jetsun Milarepa**, the accomplished **Naljorpas**, and the countless unnamed monks and practitioners who preserved the traditions of meditation, resilience, compassion, and self-discipline amidst the solitude of the Himalayas. Their lives remind us that the highest victory is mastery over oneself.

My sincere gratitude goes to the **Indian Air Force**, where I proudly served for more than twenty-two years. Military life strengthened my character, discipline, leadership, and commitment to the nation. The opportunities I received during my service enabled me to develop as both a soldier and a martial artist, while serving my fellow air warriors and their families through sports, physical fitness, and martial arts instruction. I express my heartfelt appreciation to every Grandmaster, Master, instructor, coach, and senior practitioner from whom I have had the privilege to learn throughout my martial arts journey. Every lesson, correction, demonstration, and word of encouragement has contributed to my growth and continues to guide my path.

My heartfelt thanks go to my students, whose enthusiasm and dedication have constantly motivated me to learn more, teach better, and uphold the true values of martial arts. A teacher's greatest achievement is reflected in the success and character of the students he trains, and I consider myself fortunate to have shared this journey with thousands of dedicated practitioners across India.

I also extend my sincere gratitude to the people of the Himalayan regions, whose warmth, simplicity, resilience, and deep spiritual traditions enriched my understanding of mountain life. The mountains themselves became silent teachers, offering invaluable lessons in patience, humility, courage, and perseverance.

My heartfelt appreciation goes to my colleagues, fellow adventurers, expedition members, friends, and well-wishers who stood beside me during countless journeys, training sessions, and challenging expeditions between 1998 and 2008. Their companionship transformed difficult paths into unforgettable memories. I express my deepest love and gratitude to my family, whose patience, sacrifices, encouragement, and unconditional support have been my greatest strength throughout my life's journey. Every achievement recorded in these pages belongs as much to them as it does to me.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks to every reader who chooses to accompany me through this remarkable decade. It is my hope that these pages will inspire not only martial artists but also all those who seek courage, discipline, inner peace, and a life of purpose. If this work encourages even one individual to pursue excellence with humility, integrity, compassion, and service to humanity, then my efforts will have been richly rewarded. With folded hands, I dedicate this work to my Guru, my teachers, my family, my students, the mountains that shaped my spirit, and to the timeless ideals of martial arts that continue to illuminate my path.

Dr. Ashok Kumar Lenka

Martial Artist • Soldier • Teacher • Explorer • Lifelong Student of the Himalayan Martial Tradition

Special Acknowledgements

No journey begins in a dojo, a monastery, or upon a mountain. Every extraordinary journey begins at home.

My deepest gratitude, love, and reverence are dedicated to my beloved parents, **Late Shri Bharkar Chandra Lenka** and **Late Smt. Laxmi Priya Lenka**, whose lives became my first school of discipline, simplicity, resilience, humility, and perseverance. Long before I ever wore a martial arts uniform or climbed a mountain, they unknowingly laid the foundation upon which my entire life's journey would be built.

From my father, I inherited the values of hard work, courage, endurance, and unwavering determination. During his childhood, travelling to school meant walking several kilometres every day through forests, hills, streams, muddy trails, and rugged countryside. Later, during his working life, he cycled long distances daily regardless of scorching summers, monsoon rains, or winter mornings. In those days, these were not called adventure sports—they were simply the realities of everyday life. Today, people describe such activities as endurance trekking, cross-country cycling, and wilderness survival. Looking back, I often realise that the spirit of adventure flowing through my veins is an inheritance from my father. It was always there, waiting to find its true expression.

My beloved mother, with her gentle wisdom, unwavering faith, and boundless affection, nurtured within me the virtues of compassion, patience, discipline, devotion, and respect for humanity. Together, my parents introduced me at a very young age to Yoga, meditation, physical discipline, and a life lived in harmony with nature. Those early lessons, taught not through lectures but through their own example, became the invisible foundation of everything I would later accomplish in martial arts, adventure sports, military service, and personal development.

No words can adequately express my gratitude to my beloved wife, **Smt. Sanjibanee Sudha Lenka**, whose unwavering faith, sacrifice, patience, and encouragement have remained my greatest source of strength throughout this remarkable journey. Behind every expedition, every mountain climbed, every training camp, and every achievement recorded in these pages lies her silent support and countless personal sacrifices. During long periods of separation while I served the nation, trained in remote mountains, or participated in expeditions, she courageously managed our family with remarkable resilience and never allowed me to compromise my dreams. Her understanding, encouragement, and unconditional love transformed every challenge into a new beginning.

I am equally grateful to my beloved sons, **Kalinga Kumar Lenka** and **Aryan Kumar Lenka**, who have been a constant source of inspiration, motivation, and happiness. Their curiosity, youthful energy, and belief in my work continuously reminded me that every expedition, every lesson, and every experience gained in the mountains should ultimately be passed on to the next generation. Watching them grow has inspired me not only to become a better father but also a better teacher, mentor, and human being.

I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to my loving sisters—**Smt. Puspa**, **Smt. Kalpana**, **Smt. Jyotshna**, and **Smt. Rajarani**—whose affection, blessings, encouragement, and unwavering confidence in me have remained a constant source of emotional strength throughout my life.

My sincere appreciation is equally extended to my beloved brothers—**Shri Akshaya Lenka**, **Shri Asit Lenka**, and **Shri Apurba Lenka**—whose encouragement, affection, and belief in my abilities always motivated me to continue pursuing excellence, irrespective of the challenges before me.

I express my deepest respect and gratitude to my brothers-in-law—**Dr. Khirod Kumar Samal**, **Dr. Braj Kishore Bal**, **Shri Aurovindo Pradhan**, and **Shri Saroj Jena**. Their encouragement, valuable guidance, constructive advice, and constant motivation enriched my personal and professional journey. Their confidence in my work inspired me to strive for higher goals and remain committed to lifelong learning and service to society.

As a young boy, I was profoundly inspired by the legendary martial artist Bruce Lee. His extraordinary speed, philosophy, discipline, and relentless pursuit of self-improvement ignited within me a dream that has remained alive throughout my life. To me, Bruce Lee represented far more than a martial artist; he embodied the belief that limitations exist only within the mind and that true mastery is achieved through continuous learning, self-expression, humility, and dedication.

I also express my heartfelt gratitude to **RCBL High School, Charampa**, which played a significant role in shaping my formative years. The school not only nurtured my academic education but also recognised and encouraged my passion for athletics and physical excellence. It was there that I developed into a champion athlete, learning the enduring values of sportsmanship, teamwork, discipline, leadership, and perseverance. The encouragement of my teachers, coaches, and classmates gave me the confidence to dream beyond the ordinary and laid the foundation for my future achievements in athletics, martial arts, adventure sports, and military service.

As I reflect upon my life's journey—from a young village boy inspired by Bruce Lee to becoming a martial artist, Indian Air Force Air Warrior, mountaineer, expedition leader, teacher, researcher, and lifelong student of Himalayan martial philosophy—I realise that every milestone can be traced back to these humble beginnings. Every mountain climbed, every expedition completed, every student trained, and every honour received has been built upon the values, encouragement, and blessings bestowed upon me by my family, teachers, mentors, colleagues, and friends.

This book is therefore much more than a record of my expeditions between **1998 and 2008**. It is a tribute to every individual who silently shaped my destiny. It honours the sacrifices made by my parents, the unwavering support of my wife and children, the encouragement of my brothers, sisters, and extended family, the guidance of my teachers and mentors, and the countless companions who walked beside me on mountain trails and through life's many challenges.

Whatever I have achieved belongs not to me alone but to all those who believed in me, encouraged me, prayed for me, and stood beside me through every success and every setback.

To each one of you, I offer my deepest love, heartfelt gratitude, and eternal respect.

This book is humbly dedicated to all of you.

With deepest love, gratitude, and eternal respect,

Dr. Ashok Kumar Lenka

Chapter I

The Call of the Mountains

"A warrior is not created by the mountain; the mountain merely reveals the warrior already hidden within."

Every life-changing journey begins with a single step, but long before that step is taken, invisible forces quietly shape our destiny. Looking back upon my own life, I realise that the path leading me to the mountains began not with martial arts, but with the simple values instilled by my parents, strengthened through sport, refined by military life, and ultimately transformed through the guidance of remarkable teachers.

I was born into a humble family where discipline, hard work, simplicity, and respect for nature were not taught through books—they were lived every day. My beloved father, **Late Shri Bharkar Chandra Lenka**, unknowingly became my first instructor in endurance. During his childhood, reaching school meant walking several kilometres through forests, rivers, paddy fields, muddy trails, and rugged countryside. Later, during his working life, he cycled long distances every day regardless of rain, heat, or fatigue. In those days, these were not called endurance sports, trekking, or adventure activities; they were simply the realities of life. Today, I often reflect that perhaps my own passion for mountains, trekking, and exploration was inherited from him. The spirit of adventure was already flowing through my veins long before I recognised it.

My mother, **Late Smt. Laxmi Priya Lenka**, nurtured another equally important aspect of my life. She introduced me to Yoga, meditation, devotion, simplicity, compassion, and respect for nature. Those quiet lessons of childhood became the invisible roots of everything I would later pursue in martial arts and Himalayan philosophy. Together, my parents laid the foundation upon which my entire life's journey would be built.

Like countless young boys of my generation, I was deeply inspired by the legendary **Bruce Lee**. His speed, philosophy, discipline, and relentless pursuit of perfection fascinated me. He demonstrated that martial arts were far more than methods of combat—they were pathways to self-expression, self-discovery, and continuous improvement. Although I could never have imagined where that inspiration would eventually lead me, it ignited a dream that has remained alive throughout my life.

My formative years at **RCBL High School, Charampa**, further strengthened that dream. The school recognised my enthusiasm for sports and encouraged me to participate actively in athletics. Becoming a champion athlete taught me discipline, endurance, competitive spirit, teamwork, and confidence. Those years developed not only my physical abilities but also my belief that persistent effort could overcome even the greatest challenges.

The next defining chapter of my life began when I joined the **Indian Air Force**. The Air Force transformed me in ways I had never imagined. It immersed me in an environment where discipline, precision, teamwork, leadership, courage, and national service were woven into everyday life. The military taught me that excellence is achieved not by talent alone but by consistency, dedication, and an unwavering commitment to continuous improvement. It was during my training at the **Electrical and Instrument Training Institute (E&ITI)** of the Indian Air Force that destiny introduced me to one of the most influential mentors of my martial arts journey. I met an exceptional Air Warrior who was not only an accomplished Taekwondo instructor but also a participant in the **World Taekwondo Championships** in the **Kyorugi** discipline. Coming from a modest rural background, I regarded him with immense admiration. He represented the perfect combination of soldier, athlete, scientist, and martial artist.

Until then, martial arts had fascinated me largely because of their power and beauty. Under his guidance, I discovered the science behind every movement. He explained balance, leverage, timing, biomechanics, breathing, reaction, rhythm, force generation, and efficiency with remarkable clarity. Every kick, every block, every stance, and every movement had a scientific purpose. His analytical approach completely changed my

understanding of martial arts. Instead of merely copying techniques, I began studying why they worked. This awakened within me an insatiable curiosity that continues to guide my learning even today.

More importantly, he taught me that martial arts should never remain confined within the four walls of a training hall. "Go to the mountains," he advised. "Walk through forests. Cross rivers. Climb hills. Let nature become your instructor." Those simple words transformed my life forever.

Following his guidance, I gradually ventured into mountains, dense jungles, rivers, and wilderness expeditions. Every trail became a classroom. Uneven terrain refined balance. Steep ascents developed endurance. Slippery rocks improved footwork. Rivers taught adaptability. Harsh weather cultivated resilience. Slowly, I began understanding that nature itself is the greatest martial arts master. The mountains demand humility. The forests sharpen awareness. The rivers teach fluidity. The wind teaches relaxation. Every element becomes a silent instructor for those willing to learn.

As my understanding deepened, I had the immense privilege of becoming a disciple of my revered Guru, **Acharya Babu T. Ragu**, whose influence elevated my journey to an entirely new dimension. Until then, my focus had remained largely on Taekwondo as a martial discipline. My Guru introduced me to something far greater—the philosophy of **Martial Arts in the Mountains**.

Under his guidance, I entered the profound world of Buddhist philosophy, meditation, internal cultivation, and Himalayan spiritual traditions. He encouraged me to look beyond belts, medals, championships, and physical techniques. Martial arts, he taught, were ultimately about mastering one's own mind. Through his wisdom, I began exploring the traditions associated with **Guru Bodhidharma**, whose legacy symbolises the union of meditation and disciplined physical practice, and the teachings of Himalayan masters such as **Jetsun Milarepa** and the **Naljorpas**, whose lives demonstrated extraordinary endurance, contemplation, and inner transformation. These traditions inspired me to see martial arts not merely as systems of combat but as lifelong paths of self-realisation.

Gradually, my expeditions became more than adventures. They became moving monasteries where every step was a meditation, every breath a lesson, and every challenge an opportunity to understand both nature and myself. I experimented with integrating martial movement, breathing disciplines, meditation, endurance training, survival skills, and environmental awareness into a unified approach that I now describe as **Mountain Martial Arts**. This philosophy later became the foundation of my own teaching, where students learned not only techniques but also resilience, respect for nature, leadership, teamwork, and service to society.

The decade between **1998 and 2008** became one of the most transformative periods of my life. It was a decade of mountain expeditions, dense jungle treks, Himalayan explorations, martial arts practice, philosophical inquiry, adventure sports, and countless experiences that shaped my understanding of what it truly means to be a warrior. Every mountain climbed, every forest crossed, every monastery visited, and every hardship endured became another chapter in an education that no classroom could ever provide.

This book is the story of that extraordinary decade. It is not merely a collection of expeditions or training methods. It is a journey through landscapes that transformed my understanding of martial arts, nature, leadership, and life itself. It is an invitation to every reader to discover that the greatest opponent is not another person but one's own fear, ego, and limitations. As you turn these pages, I invite you to walk beside me through the rainforests of the Western Ghats, across the mighty Himalayas, into ancient monasteries, and along forgotten mountain trails. Together we shall discover that the highest peak is not always found upon a map. It is found within the human spirit.

The journey begins with my first great wilderness classroom—the rain-soaked forests of **Kudremukh**, where I learned that the jungle does not reward strength alone; it rewards awareness, patience, humility, and harmony with nature.

Chapter - II**1997–1998 | Rainforest & Endurance Phase**

The First Call of the Wild Kudremukh Jungle Expedition (1997–1998)
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Every mountain journey begins long before the first step is taken. It begins with a decision—to leave the comfort of civilisation and enter a world governed entirely by nature. The jungle neither welcomes nor rejects anyone; it simply demands respect. Unlike a sports arena where conditions are controlled and predictable, the rainforest tests every dimension of human capability. It strips away comfort, exposes weaknesses, and rewards only those who adapt with patience, discipline, and humility.

Our Kudremukh Jungle Expedition of 1997–1998 became my first true classroom in wilderness endurance. Located in the magnificent Western Ghats, Kudremukh is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, rich biodiversity, and one of the most demanding trekking environments in India. Covering approximately 100 kilometres through dense tropical rainforest, the expedition was far more than a trek—it was an immersion into nature's relentless challenges.

The terrain constantly changed beneath our feet. Steep ascents gave way to slippery descents. Narrow forest trails disappeared beneath thick vegetation. Heavy tropical rainfall transformed ordinary paths into streams of flowing mud, while dense fog frequently reduced visibility to only a few metres. Every step demanded complete concentration, for a single mistake could lead to injury or exhaustion.

The rainforest possessed a rhythm of its own. Towering trees blocked much of the sunlight, leaving the forest floor damp throughout the day. High humidity drained energy, clothing remained perpetually wet, and equipment required constant care. Leeches silently attached themselves to our boots and clothing with every halt, reminding us that the jungle continually tests both physical endurance and mental composure. We soon learned that frustration wasted precious energy, while acceptance conserved it.

The greatest challenge, however, was not the environment itself but maintaining a steady body and a calm mind over long distances. During this expedition, I began experimenting with synchronising breath and movement, inspired by traditional Himalayan breathing disciplines often associated with rLung-gom (Lung-gom). By regulating my breathing with each stride, maintaining a relaxed posture, and preserving a steady rhythm instead of relying on bursts of speed, I discovered a remarkable sense of continuous movement—a state in which fatigue seemed to diminish and the body, breath, and mind moved in harmony. Rather than fighting the jungle, I learned to move with it.

This experience profoundly changed my understanding of endurance. I realised that success in extreme environments is not determined by physical strength alone. The strongest individual may tire quickly if the mind becomes restless, while a disciplined practitioner who controls breathing, conserves energy, and remains mentally composed can travel astonishing distances with consistency.

Kudremukh also revealed another important lesson: nature is the greatest martial arts instructor. The rainforest teaches balance on slippery rocks, agility through tangled vegetation, awareness amidst hidden dangers, patience during prolonged hardship, courage under uncertainty, and humility before forces far greater than ourselves. Every obstacle becomes an exercise, every climb a lesson in perseverance, and every kilometre an opportunity to cultivate resilience.

Looking back today, I recognise that the Kudremukh Expedition marked the beginning of my lifelong journey into what I now call Mountain Martial Arts. It was here that I first understood that martial arts need

not be confined to the dojo. The jungle itself became a training hall, the mountains became silent masters, and every breath became part of an ongoing meditation in motion.

Those hundred kilometres through the rain-soaked forests of the Western Ghats were not merely an adventure. They became the foundation upon which the next decade of Himalayan expeditions, martial exploration, and spiritual inquiry would be built.

1997 Expedition: Kudremukh Jungle Expedition (Western Ghats)

- ❖ Stats: 100 km Trek | Highest Peak in Western Ghats.
- ❖ Climate: High humidity, dense tropical rain, and leech-infested terrain.
- ❖ Internal Practice: Used Lung-gom (rLung-gom) breathing to maintain a tireless "flow state" during the 100 km trek, synchronizing breath with movement to navigate slippery rainforest floors.



1998 Expedition: Kudremukh Jungle Expedition (Western Ghats)

- ❖ Stats: 100 km Trek | Highest Peak in Western Ghats.
 - ❖ Climate: High humidity, dense tropical rain, and leech-infested terrain.
- Internal Practice: Used Lung-gom (rLung-gom) breathing to maintain a tireless "flow state" during the 100 km trek, synchronizing breath with movement to navigate slippery rainforest floors.



Chapter III

1998 – “Wild to Ocean” Biking Expedition Bangalore to Kerala through Bandipur and Mudumalai National Parks

The "Wild to Ocean" Biking Expedition of 1998 was an unforgettable long-distance motorcycle journey that connected the bustling city of Bangalore with the serene coastline of Kerala, passing through the magnificent forests of Bandipur National Park and Mudumalai National Park. The expedition combined adventure motorcycling with the principles of martial discipline, demanding continuous concentration, endurance, and respect for the natural environment.

The route traversed one of India's most important wildlife corridors, where dense tropical forests, winding roads, and changing elevations created both spectacular scenery and constant challenges. The climate shifted dramatically throughout the journey—from the cool, humid canopy of the forests to the warm tropical conditions of the coastal plains. Riding through protected wildlife habitats required disciplined speed management, heightened awareness, and strict adherence to forest regulations, as encounters with elephants, deer, gaur, and other wildlife were always possible.

This expedition became an outstanding exercise in developing the martial qualities of awareness, anticipation, and one-pointed concentration. Every curve demanded complete attention, every change in terrain required precise judgment, and every kilometre reinforced the importance of calm decision-making under dynamic conditions. The reflexes, balance, coordination, and rapid response developed through years of Taekwondo training proved invaluable in safely negotiating narrow forest roads, unexpected obstacles, and continuously changing riding conditions. Long hours on the motorcycle also became a form of moving meditation. By maintaining rhythmic breathing, relaxed posture, and unwavering mental focus, fatigue could be managed effectively while preserving alertness throughout the journey. The expedition demonstrated that the principles of martial arts—discipline, situational awareness, emotional control, and efficient movement—apply as naturally to adventure riding as they do inside a training hall.

More than a motorcycle expedition, "Wild to Ocean" reinforced my belief that every journey through nature is an opportunity for self-development. It strengthened my conviction that true martial arts extend beyond techniques and competition, preparing an individual to remain calm, aware, and adaptable in every environment. The forests taught vigilance, the open highways cultivated endurance, and the journey itself became another important milestone in my continuing exploration of Mountain and Nature-Based Martial Arts.

1998 | “Wild to Ocean” Biking Expedition (Bangalore to Kerala)

- ❖ **Stats:** Traversing Bandipur and Mudumalai dense forests.
- ❖ **Climate:** Shifting from humid forest canopies to coastal heat.
- ❖ **Practice:** Mental "one-pointedness" and Taekwondo reflex conditioning for high-speed navigation through wildlife corridors.





1999 – Shakleshpur to Subrahmanya Abandoned Railway Track Trek (Karnataka) - Terrain Overview

The **Shakleshpur to Subrahmanya** abandoned railway track is one of the most scenic and adventurous trekking routes in the **Western Ghats of Karnataka**. Originally built as part of an old mountain railway line, the route winds through dense tropical forests, deep valleys, rocky cuttings, towering bridges, and numerous dark railway tunnels before descending towards the temple town of Subrahmanya.

The trek traverses rugged mountain terrain with a combination of abandoned railway tracks, loose gravel, steep embankments, river crossings, waterfalls, and thick evergreen forests. During the monsoon and post-monsoon seasons, the region receives heavy rainfall, making the tracks slippery and increasing the challenge of negotiating moss-covered bridges, wet rocks, and waterlogged sections. The surrounding forests are rich in biodiversity and are home to a variety of wildlife, making awareness and environmental responsibility essential throughout the journey.

The expedition demands excellent endurance, balance, and mental concentration. Long tunnels, high railway bridges spanning deep gorges, and continuously changing terrain test a trekker's confidence and composure. The route offers a unique combination of natural beauty, historical engineering, and wilderness adventure, making it one of the most memorable trekking experiences in the Western Ghats. For a martial artist, the Shakleshpur–Subrahmanya trek becomes an ideal training ground where every step develops balance, situational awareness, patience, and adaptability. The constantly changing terrain reinforces the timeless principle that true strength lies not in overpowering nature but in moving with awareness, discipline, and respect for the environment.

1999 | Shakleshpura to Ohke Subranayam Abandon Railway Track Trek (Karnataka)



Chapter - IV

1998–2001 | High Himalayan Ascents & Ministerial Flag-offs

Into the Realm of the Himalayas

Sinla Pass and Chhota Kailash Expedition (1998)

"The Himalayas do not simply challenge the body—they transform the mind."

The year 1998 marked one of the most significant milestones in my journey into mountain martial arts. Having discovered through earlier expeditions that nature is the greatest teacher of endurance and awareness, I was drawn towards the mighty Himalayas, where physical effort and spiritual reflection exist in perfect harmony. Among the expeditions that profoundly influenced my understanding was the journey to Sinla Pass and Chhota Kailash, rising to an altitude of approximately 18,500 feet above sea level.

Unlike the tropical forests of the Western Ghats, the Himalayas presented an entirely different world. Every aspect of survival demanded greater awareness. Oxygen levels steadily declined with altitude, temperatures fluctuated dramatically, strong winds swept across exposed ridges, and the rugged mountain terrain constantly reminded us that human beings are only temporary visitors in this magnificent landscape.

Reaching Sinla Pass required days of continuous trekking through isolated valleys, alpine meadows, glacial streams, loose scree, and steep mountain trails. Every step became more demanding as the air grew thinner. At such elevations, even simple movements required controlled breathing, patience, and careful energy management. The mountains offered no shortcuts. Progress depended upon rhythm rather than speed.

The expedition tested every dimension of human endurance. Long hours of climbing under an intense Himalayan sun were followed by freezing nights under clear mountain skies. Sudden weather changes were common, with bright sunshine often replaced by dense clouds, snowfall, or icy winds within a matter of minutes. Carrying equipment at high altitude demanded both physical strength and mental determination, while every decision had to be taken with caution and respect for the mountain environment.

For me, however, this expedition represented far more than a physical challenge. It became an opportunity to apply the principles of martial arts outside the training hall. Every uphill climb demanded balance, stability, and efficient body mechanics. Every descent required concentration, precise footwork, and controlled movement. The mountain itself became an instructor, constantly teaching lessons that no dojo floor could replicate.

Throughout the journey, I consciously integrated breathing with movement, maintaining a calm and steady rhythm rather than allowing fatigue to dictate my pace. This approach, inspired by Himalayan contemplative traditions and martial breathing practices, enabled me to conserve energy and maintain mental clarity despite the demanding altitude. I gradually realised that endurance is created not by muscular strength alone but by harmony between breath, movement, and awareness.

As we approached Chhota Kailash, the landscape revealed an atmosphere unlike anywhere I had previously experienced. Towering snow-covered peaks, crystal-clear glacial lakes, ancient rock formations, and profound silence created a sense of reverence that transcended ordinary adventure. The Himalayas have long been regarded as sacred by pilgrims, yogis, monks, and seekers of wisdom. Standing amidst this timeless environment, I understood why generations of spiritual practitioners chose these mountains for meditation and self-realisation.

The silence of the Himalayas possesses a unique power. Away from the noise of modern life, one begins to hear the rhythm of one's own breathing, the beating of the heart, and the subtle dialogue between body and mind. It was during this expedition that I truly experienced the meaning of moving meditation. Every step became an expression of mindfulness. Every breath became an exercise in discipline. Every obstacle became an opportunity to cultivate patience and humility.

The expedition also reinforced one of the most important principles of martial philosophy: victory over nature is impossible. The mountain is never conquered. Instead, the mountain allows us to pass only when we approach it with respect, preparation, and humility. This understanding transformed my perspective forever. I no longer viewed expeditions as battles against the elements but as partnerships with nature, where success depends upon cooperation rather than domination.

Returning from Sinla Pass and Chhota Kailash, I realised that my understanding of martial arts had expanded beyond physical technique. The Himalayas had become my greatest training hall, where endurance, awareness, compassion, discipline, and inner strength developed naturally through direct experience. The lessons learned at 18,500 feet would accompany me on every expedition that followed and would later become integral to my own philosophy of Mountain Martial Arts, which I would share with hundreds of students in the years ahead.

Looking back today, I recognise that this expedition was not simply a journey across high mountain passes. It was a journey into the deeper dimensions of the warrior's path—a path where the ultimate summit lies not upon the mountain, but within the human spirit.

1998 | Sinla Pass & Chhota Kailash (18,028 ft)

- ❖ **Range:** Kumaon Range, Himalayas.
 - ❖ **Flagged Off By:** Shri George Fernandes (Then Defence Minister).
 - ❖ **Climate:** Sub-zero temperatures, high-velocity winds, and thinning oxygen.
- Internal Practice:** Performed Taekwondo Poomsae at the summit; utilized Tummo (Inner Fire) to regulate core temperature against the biting Himalayan wind



Chapter - V

1999 | Mount Bhagirathi II (22,500 ft) Expedition

Introduction to Mount Bhagirathi

Rising majestically above the sacred Gangotri Glacier in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand, Mount Bhagirathi is one of the most spectacular mountain groups in the Indian Himalayas. The massif consists of three prominent summits—Bhagirathi I (6,856 m / 22,493 ft), Bhagirathi II (6,512 m / 21,365 ft), and Bhagirathi III (6,454 m / 21,175 ft)—forming an awe-inspiring granite wall that dominates the upper reaches of the Bhagirathi Valley. These peaks stand close to the revered pilgrimage centre of Gangotri, the traditional source region of the holy River Ganga, making them significant not only to mountaineers but also to spiritual seekers from around the world.

Mount Bhagirathi is renowned for its steep rock faces, glaciated approaches, technical climbing routes, unpredictable weather, and demanding high-altitude environment. Temperatures can fall well below freezing, while powerful winds, crevasses, avalanches, and rapidly changing mountain conditions make every expedition a serious test of endurance, judgment, and teamwork. Climbers attempting these peaks must possess exceptional physical fitness, technical competence, mental resilience, and complete respect for the mountain environment.

For me, the Bhagirathi expedition represented far more than a mountaineering objective. It was another step in my continuing search to understand the relationship between martial arts, nature, and human endurance. The mountain became a living classroom where every ascent demanded discipline, every breath required awareness, and every challenge reinforced the timeless martial principle that true victory lies not in conquering the mountain, but in conquering one's own fear, ego, and limitations. Amidst the silence of the Garhwal Himalayas, I experienced once again that the greatest lessons are learned not from the summit itself, but from the journey undertaken to reach it.

- ❖ **Range:** Garhwal Range, Himalayas.
- ❖ **Flagged Off By:** Shri Mukul Wasnik (Then Sports Minister).
- ❖ **Climate:** Extreme high-altitude hypoxia (low oxygen) and permanent snowfields.
- ❖ **Internal Practice:** Advanced Tummo application to prevent altitude sickness and maintain warmth during overnight stays in the "Death Zone" altitudes.





Mount Bhagirathi II Expedition (1999) A Story of Courage, Leadership, Snowstorms, and the Wisdom of Safe Return

"In the Himalayas, success is not measured only by reaching the summit, but by the wisdom to return safely and the character forged along the journey."

Introduction

The Mount Bhagirathi II Expedition of 1999 marked one of the most defining chapters of my early Himalayan mountaineering career. Organized by the Adventure Sports Association of India (ASAI), the expedition aimed to climb the magnificent Mount Bhagirathi II in the Garhwal Himalayas, one of the most technically demanding mountain groups surrounding the sacred Gangotri Glacier.

Our twelve-member expedition was led by Mr. Sanjay Kaliya, while the administrative leadership was entrusted to Acharya Babu T. Raghu, my mentor who had already introduced me to the deeper philosophy of mountain exploration beyond adventure alone. The expedition was much more than an attempt to reach a summit; it became an unforgettable classroom of leadership, teamwork, technical mountaineering, and survival under extreme Himalayan conditions.

Although the summit remained beyond our reach due to severe western disturbances, relentless snowfall, and rapidly deteriorating weather, the expedition successfully established camps up to 19,500 feet, demonstrating sound expedition planning, technical competence, disciplined decision-making, and responsible leadership. Looking back today, I consider this expedition one of the greatest learning

experiences of my mountaineering life, because it taught me that in the Himalayas, the mountain always has the final word.

Flag Off and Journey to Gangotri

On 27 September 1999, the expedition was ceremonially flagged off by Shri Mukul Wasnik, then Union Minister for Sports. His encouragement inspired the team as we embarked on our long journey towards Gangotri, the sacred gateway to the Bhagirathi Massif. The following evening, we reached Gangotri (10,500 ft), where final logistical preparations were completed. Porters and mules were hired, equipment was checked, loads were distributed, and the excitement of entering the high Himalayas became tangible.

Trek to Gomukh – Entering the World of Ice

On 29 September, our team commenced the trek from Gangotri at 0730 hours. Passing through the beautiful Himalayan landscape, we reached Bhojbasa around noon before continuing towards Gomukh, arriving at approximately 1700 hours after covering nearly 18 kilometres.

Gomukh, the sacred source of the Bhagirathi River and the snout of the mighty Gangotri Glacier, marked our first camp. Standing before the immense glacier for the first time filled me with awe. It was here that I truly realised the scale and majesty of the Himalayas. The evening was spent establishing camp using Vango expedition tents, organising equipment, and preparing for the technical phase ahead.

Acclimatisation and Technical Preparation

Recognising that successful mountaineering depends upon proper acclimatisation rather than haste, the entire day of 30 September was devoted to technical revision and adaptation to altitude.

The team practised:

- Rope management
- Glacier travel
- Anchoring techniques
- Climbing systems
- Essential mountaineering knots
- Camp management
- Himalayan geography
- Expedition safety procedures

This refresher ensured that every member was technically prepared before entering increasingly difficult glacier terrain.

Crossing the Gangotri and Chaturangi Glaciers

On 1 October, after evaluating the weather, we left camp at 0600 hours for Nandanvan Ridge. The route demanded careful navigation across the heavily crevassed Gangotri Glacier and Chaturangi Glacier, where every step required concentration and teamwork. After nearly ten kilometres of glacier travel, we reached Nandanvan Ridge by afternoon.

During the approach we met the Deputy Director of the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering (NIM), who was returning from the Bhagirathi region. He informed us that the climbing route had already been prepared with fixed ropes but also warned us that the weather was beginning to deteriorate. After a brief halt for tea, we continued to Upper Nandanvan (16,000 ft), arriving around 1700 hours. Light snowfall welcomed us into camp, while frozen streams covered with bergschrund ice made water collection increasingly difficult.

Leadership Under Pressure

The following day was dedicated to further acclimatisation and advanced snow and ice craft. During one demonstration, Expedition Leader Mr. Sanjay Kaliya sustained a minor injury. After examination by Dr. Umesh, it was decided that he should temporarily discontinue climbing.

Without hesitation, Acharya Babu T. Raghu assumed responsibility as the climbing leader. Watching this seamless transition of leadership taught me one of the most valuable lessons of expedition life—that true leadership is measured not by authority but by the ability to inspire confidence during uncertainty.

The Mountains Begin to Change

By 3 October, dense clouds enveloped the entire Nandanvan Basin. Visibility dropped to nearly 50 feet, while temperatures hovered around 3°C. Unable to climb, we transformed the camp into a high-altitude classroom. Discussions covered:

- Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS)
- Avalanche awareness
- Himalayan weather systems
- Survival techniques
- Expedition planning

Every weather delay became another opportunity to learn.

Advance Base Camp

On 4 October, a brief improvement in visibility allowed the stronger climbing group under Acharya Babu T. Raghu to establish Advance Base Camp (ABC) at approximately 17,500 feet. Despite unstable weather and demanding terrain, the successful establishment of ABC represented a major logistical achievement. The remainder of the team joined the following day. However, conditions deteriorated rapidly. Heavy snowfall buried our tents nearly halfway. Temperatures plunged below freezing. Water sources disappeared beneath thick ice, forcing us to melt snow continuously for drinking water—a slow process that consumed valuable fuel.

Camp I – Into the Storm

On 6 October, following medical examinations, two climbers were instructed to remain behind for additional acclimatisation. Meanwhile, a four-member climbing team, led by Acharya Babu T. Raghu, moved upward to establish Camp I at approximately 19,500 feet, near the lower eastern ridge of Bhagirathi II. Old cairns from previous expeditions provided a sheltered campsite away from avalanche paths and direct wind exposure. Yet nature soon reminded us of its overwhelming power. Heavy snowfall intensified throughout the afternoon. Visibility dropped to barely 10 feet. Water bottles froze solid. Even boiled eggs froze inside their shells.

As darkness descended, three climbers began experiencing symptoms of Acute Mountain Sickness, including severe headache and nausea. Immediate medical treatment was administered. Throughout the night, winds exceeding 100 km/h battered our tents. Sleep became almost impossible as every gust threatened to tear the shelters apart. The expedition leadership spent the night continuously evaluating weather forecasts, avalanche hazards, team health, and the feasibility of continuing the climb.

Trapped by the Western Disturbance

On 7 October, nearly 2.5 feet of fresh snow accumulated around Camp I. Visibility fell to almost zero. The temperature dropped between –10°C and –15°C. The cold penetrated every layer of clothing, numbing fingers, toes, ears, and face despite multiple layers of insulation. Communication between Camp I and Advance Base Camp was maintained, but it became increasingly evident that the expedition had entered a dangerous phase. With only four possible summit days remaining, every decision carried enormous consequences.

The Decision That Saved Lives

On 8 October 1999, after careful assessment of the deteriorating conditions, Acharya Babu T. Raghu made the difficult yet courageous decision to abandon the summit attempt. The decision was based upon:

- Rapid deterioration of weather.
- Continuing heavy snowfall.
- Increased avalanche danger.
- Fatigue and partial illness among team members.
- Limited remaining summit window.
- Growing isolation between camps.

For many climbers, turning back only a short distance below a summit is emotionally difficult. However, experienced mountaineers understand that mountains will always remain. Human life is irreplaceable. The retreat was executed with exemplary discipline. The Advance Base Camp descended safely to Base Camp. Camp I followed shortly afterwards. Every member returned without injury. Looking back, I regard this decision as the expedition's greatest achievement.

Return Journey

Following the successful withdrawal, the team began its return journey through Gangotri towards New Delhi. By 13 October 1999, almost every expedition member had safely returned. The participants were warmly received by Shri Oscar Fernandes, then General Secretary of the All India Congress Committee (AICC), who congratulated the team and distributed participation certificates in recognition of the expedition.

Lessons from Bhagirathi II

Although Mount Bhagirathi II remained unclimbed, the expedition achieved several remarkable milestones:

- Safe climbing to approximately 19,500 feet.
- Successful establishment of camps up to Camp I.
- Excellent execution of glacier travel and snowcraft.
- Effective leadership transition during adversity.
- Sound management of Acute Mountain Sickness.
- Disciplined decision-making under severe weather conditions.
- Safe withdrawal with zero casualties.

For me personally, this expedition became a turning point. It strengthened my confidence in technical mountaineering while reinforcing lessons that would later shape my philosophy of Mountain Martial Arts. I learned that discipline, awareness, patience, controlled breathing, and calm decision-making are as essential in mountaineering as they are in martial arts. Years later, during my expeditions to Rudugaira, Nanda Ghunti, Pin Parvati, Siachen, and Mount Hanuman Tibba, the lessons first learned on Bhagirathi II repeatedly guided my actions.

Chapter Reflection

Today, I remember the Mount Bhagirathi II Expedition not as an unsuccessful summit attempt but as one of the finest demonstrations of responsible Himalayan leadership. The mountain did not allow us to stand upon its summit, yet it rewarded us with something far more valuable—experience, wisdom, humility, and respect for nature. This expedition affirmed a truth that every mountaineer eventually learns: The greatest victory in the Himalayas is not conquering the mountain—it is returning safely with the knowledge, courage, and character to climb another day.

Chapter VI

Year 2000 – Triple Peak Expedition

Friendship Peak – Stithidhar Peak – Manali,

Himachal Pradesh (18,500 ft)

"The mountains teach that every summit conquered is only the beginning of a higher journey."

The year **2000** marked another significant milestone in my pursuit of adventure, endurance, and mountain-based martial arts with the **Triple Peak Expedition** in the majestic **Pir Panjal Range** of the Indian Himalayas. This expedition involved ascending three prominent high-altitude peaks around **Manali**—**Friendship Peak**, **Stithidhar Peak**, and the surrounding high mountain ridges—reaching elevations of nearly **18,500 feet** above sea level.

Situated in the **Kullu Valley of Himachal Pradesh**, these peaks are among the most sought-after training and expedition destinations for aspiring mountaineers. Their combination of glaciers, snowfields, rocky ridges, moraine, and steep mountain slopes provides an ideal environment for developing high-altitude mountaineering skills while testing physical endurance and mental resilience. The region serves as an important gateway to the greater Himalayan ranges and has long been used by mountaineering institutions for advanced alpine training.

Unlike lower-altitude trekking expeditions, climbing these peaks required careful acclimatisation, technical mountaineering skills, and disciplined teamwork. The journey traversed dense deodar forests, alpine meadows, glacial moraines, snow-covered slopes, and exposed ridgelines before reaching the high camps. As altitude increased, oxygen levels decreased significantly, making every step more demanding. Temperatures frequently dropped below freezing, while sudden snowfall, icy winds, and rapidly changing mountain weather constantly reminded us of the unpredictable nature of the Himalayas.

The expedition demanded proficiency in the use of mountaineering equipment, including ice axes, crampons, ropes, harnesses, helmets, and snow anchors. Walking across glaciers, negotiating crevasses, ascending steep snow slopes, and maintaining balance on exposed ridges required complete concentration and absolute trust in both equipment and teammates. Every movement had to be deliberate, efficient, and disciplined, where even a small mistake could have serious consequences.

For me, the Triple Peak Expedition was much more than a mountaineering challenge. It became another opportunity to apply the principles of martial arts in one of nature's most demanding environments. The balance developed through Taekwondo, the discipline cultivated through military life, and the mental composure strengthened by meditation all came together on the icy slopes of the Himalayas. Every climb reinforced the understanding that true strength is not measured by physical power alone but by one's ability to remain calm, focused, and determined under extreme conditions.

This expedition further deepened my conviction that mountains are among the finest academies of leadership and character. They teach patience through slow ascents, humility through their immense scale, teamwork through shared responsibility, and perseverance through relentless effort. Every summit became a lesson, every glacier a classroom, and every challenge another step in my continuing journey to integrate adventure, mountaineering, and martial philosophy into a unified way of life.

The experiences gained during the **Friendship Peak–Stithidhar Triple Peak Expedition** would become invaluable in preparing me for even greater Himalayan expeditions in the years that followed, strengthening my belief that the highest achievements are born not from conquering mountains, but from conquering oneself.

2000 | Triple Peak Expedition: Friendship, Stithidhar, Manali (18,500 ft)

- **Range:** Dhauladhar Range, Himalayas.
- **Flagged Off By:** Smt. V.S. Ramadevi (Karnataka Governor), Shri Jagjit Singh Dhindsa (Sports Minister), and Air Marshal J.S. Rai (IAF).
- **Climate:** Unpredictable alpine weather with heavy snow accumulation.
Internal Practice: Mastered Lung-gom "swift-foot" techniques to traverse between three summits in rapid succession, maintaining high kinetic energy.



Mount Stithidhar Expedition (2000) *From the Valleys of Solang to the Summit of Stithidhar* Report on the Expedition

The year 2000 marked another significant milestone in my Himalayan mountaineering journey. Following earlier expeditions in the Garhwal Himalayas, I was selected to participate in the Mount Stithidhar Expedition, organised by the Adventure Sports Association of India (ASAI). The expedition brought together mountaineers, adventure enthusiasts, and martial artists from different parts of the country with the common objective of climbing one of the technically demanding peaks of the Pir Panjal Range in Himachal Pradesh.

The expedition commenced on **15 August 2000**, when participants from across India reported to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), New Delhi. The following day, 16 August 2000, the expedition was ceremonially flagged off by the Hon'ble Union Minister for Sports, Shri Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa, from his official residence in New Delhi. The ceremony infused every participant with confidence and patriotic spirit, reminding us that we represented not only our respective states but also the growing adventure movement of India. The same evening, a 55-member expedition team, under the leadership of Shri Babu T. Raghu, Secretary of ASAI, departed by bus for Manali, Himachal Pradesh. After an overnight journey through the plains and foothills, we reached Solang Nallah at approximately 1600 hours on 17 August 2000, where the real adventure was about to begin.

17 August 2000 – Solang Nallah: The Gateway to the Expedition. Nestled at an altitude of approximately 8,000 feet above sea level, Solang Nallah is one of Himachal Pradesh's most picturesque alpine valleys. Located on the banks of the River Beas and surrounded by snow-covered peaks, it is internationally known for adventure sports such as skiing, paragliding, trekking, and mountaineering.

The expedition leader wisely decided to spend the first night at Solang Nallah to allow the team adequate time for acclimatisation before ascending into higher altitudes. Within a short time, the peaceful valley transformed into a vibrant expedition camp as eleven colourful Vango tents were erected along the banks of the Beas River, resembling a small mountain village.

To ensure efficient administration, the 55 participants were divided into eleven expedition teams, each consisting of a team leader and four members. The teams were named after India's great rivers—Ganga, Yamuna, Kaveri, Narmada, Godavari, Kabini, Periyar, Sutlej, Brahmaputra, Beas, and Niranjan. The contingent from Odisha consisted of seven members:

- Ashok Kumar Lenka
- Bhaskar
- Shyamsunder
- Indrajit Muni
- Ajit K. Dora
- Sujit Pati
- Sarat Samanta

Among us, the first four members were entrusted with the responsibility of leading four expedition teams—Narmada, Godavari, Niranjan, and Kabini. I was honoured to serve as the leader of Team Narmada, a responsibility that demanded not only climbing ability but also leadership, team management, and concern for the safety and welfare of every member.

18 August 2000 – The Journey Begins The first day of trekking finally arrived. After an early breakfast consisting of hot soup and noodles, the expedition left Solang Nallah at 0830 hours. With fifty-five climbers, mountaineering equipment, rucksacks, and supplies moving together through the valley, the procession resembled a small village advancing steadily into the Himalayas.

Our initial route followed a well-constructed mountain road for nearly six kilometres before reaching the picturesque settlement of Dundi, home to an important Government Avalanche Research Centre. True to its name, Dundi was draped in a blanket of mist, creating an atmosphere of mystery and tranquillity. After a brief halt to admire the surroundings, the expedition continued towards Bakratch.

From Dundi onwards, the terrain changed dramatically. The broad mountain road gave way to a narrow shepherd's trail winding through dense alpine vegetation, rocky slopes, and countless mountain streams cascading from the surrounding peaks. Although the trail demanded constant attention, the breathtaking scenery more than compensated for the physical effort. Hillsides carpeted with colourful wildflowers, towering pine forests, and crystal-clear waterfalls created an unforgettable Himalayan panorama.

The route to Bakratch passed beneath the majestic Seven Sisters Ridge, whose towering slopes silently watched over our progress. After nearly a full day's march, we reached Bakratch at around 1700 hours. Even before our arrival, our leader sensed an approaching weather system. Dark clouds gathered rapidly over the surrounding peaks, and he immediately ordered everyone to pitch tents and collect water without delay. His foresight proved absolutely correct.

Within an hour, the mountains unleashed their fury. Violent winds swept across the valley, followed by torrential rain that continued for nearly two hours. Inside our Vango tents, we experienced one of the most unforgettable nights of the expedition. The tents shook violently under the force of the storm while the thunderous roar of the Beas River echoed through the valley. Intermittently, the booming sounds of distant

avalanches reverberated across the mountains, creating the eerie impression that entire slopes were collapsing around us.

For a moment, it felt as though the Himalayas themselves had awakened. Sitting silently inside the tent, listening to the relentless forces of nature, I realised that these mountains were silently teaching us their first lesson—those who wish to enter the Himalayas must first learn to respect their power.

Despite the harsh weather, the kitchen team continued preparing food late into the night. At an altitude of nearly 10,500 feet, temperatures dropped rapidly, and a few members began experiencing the early effects of altitude, including breathlessness and mild mountain sickness.

As leader of Team Narmada, comprising Pallav, D. P. Singh, Mishra, and Ram Prakash, I ensured that every member remained warm, hydrated, and mentally prepared. Fortunately, all members of my team remained healthy and in excellent condition. The mountains had tested us on the very first day, and we had passed our first lesson together.

Vyaskund Lake to Camp-I: Into the Realm of Rock, Ice and Courage

Leaving the serenity of Advance Base Camp, our next objective was Camp-I, situated high above the sacred Vyaskund Lake. Before beginning the ascent, I paused for a few moments to absorb the breathtaking beauty of the lake. Nestled at an altitude of approximately 12,500 feet, Vyaskund appeared like an emerald jewel cradled amidst towering Himalayan peaks. Its crystal-clear, tranquil green waters reflected the surrounding mountains with astonishing clarity, creating a scene of almost divine beauty.

According to ancient Hindu tradition, Maharshi Vyas is believed to have composed the great epic *Mahabharata* on the shores of this sacred lake. The place radiated an extraordinary sense of peace and spirituality, making it easy to understand why sages had chosen these remote mountains for meditation and contemplation.

The lake was also surrounded by mysterious legends. Local shepherds narrated stories that anyone who attempted to swim in its icy waters had never returned alive, and that even the bodies of the victims could not be recovered. One particularly haunting tale spoke of a scuba-diving instructor from Chandigarh who had entered the lake during a rescue operation but also lost his life. Whether fact or folklore, these stories added an aura of mystery to the sacred waters.

For several minutes, we sat quietly beside the lake, watching the narrow stream of glacial meltwater gently flow into it. The silence was broken only by the soothing sound of flowing water and the distant echoes of the mountains. Before departing, we captured several photographs, knowing that this magnificent landscape would remain etched in our memories forever.

Leaving the tranquillity of Vyaskund behind, the real climb now began.

From the lake onwards, the route rose sharply, gaining nearly 3,000 feet towards Camp-I. Every climber carried a load of approximately eight to nine kilograms, consisting of food, tents, mountaineering equipment and personal gear. While many of the younger climbers pushed ahead enthusiastically, eager to reach the next camp first, I deliberately chose to remain towards the rear of the group.

Years of martial arts training had taught me an invaluable lesson—mountaineering is not a race. Victory belongs not to the fastest climber but to the one who conserves energy, exercises patience and reaches the summit safely. I realised that exhausting myself in a needless competition during the approach to Camp-

I would only reduce my chances of succeeding during the final summit attempt. Losing an hour on the approach meant nothing if it helped preserve the strength required for the mountain's ultimate challenge.

The landscape changed dramatically with every metre of ascent. Up to approximately 13,500 feet, lush alpine meadows carpeted the mountainsides with vibrant greenery and colourful wildflowers. Beyond that altitude, vegetation gradually disappeared, giving way to a harsh world of rock, scree and shattered mountain ridges. Massive, unstable boulders lay scattered everywhere, while several landslide zones demanded our complete concentration. Every step had to be calculated carefully, as even a single loose rock could trigger a dangerous chain reaction.

As we continued climbing, Vijayanand and Sreedhar moved ahead to scout a suitable location for Camp-I. Suddenly, the silence of the mountains was shattered by a terrifying roar. Enormous boulders, some the size of small vehicles, thundered down the mountainside at tremendous speed, crashing against the rocks below like missiles. The sound was unlike anything I had ever heard—a deafening combination of exploding rock, echoing cliffs and raw natural power. It was my first experience of such a massive rockfall, and it left every one of us deeply shaken.

Later, we learnt that even our expedition leader had been caught in the same rockfall while searching for a campsite. For nearly five minutes he remained trapped in the danger zone before narrowly escaping. It was a miraculous reminder that in the Himalayas, experience alone does not guarantee safety; survival often depends upon sound judgement, teamwork and, at times, divine grace.

After nearly five hours of relentless climbing, we finally reached the proposed site for Camp-I at approximately 2:40 p.m. Despite our exhaustion, there was no time to rest. The steep rocky slope first had to be levelled before tents could be erected. For over an hour we shifted countless rocks, flattened the uneven ground and prepared secure platforms for the tents.

Once the camp had been established, the advance team immediately proceeded higher to begin route reconnaissance and rope fixing towards the summit. While Gurdev, Muni and I prepared hot soup for the climbers, Halдар courageously ventured into the dangerous rockfall zone to fetch drinking water. Muni meticulously organised the equipment and supplies, ensuring everything was ready for the following day's climb. By evening, the route-fixing party returned after depositing mountaineering equipment at approximately 16,500 feet, where Camp-II would later be established.

Camp-I – Living Under the Shadow of Rockfall

Camp-I stood at an altitude of approximately 15,500 feet on a steep rocky ridge inclined at nearly sixty-five degrees. Daytime temperatures hovered around 2–3°C but dropped sharply after sunset. The camp was located barely fifty metres from the notorious Ladhaki rockfall corridor, where falling boulders regularly thundered down the mountainside.

At this altitude, oxygen became noticeably scarce, and even routine activities required considerable effort. Water was difficult to obtain, and several climbers began showing symptoms of acute mountain sickness due to the reduced oxygen levels.

The original plan had been for the summit team to descend immediately after their attempt, allowing the supporting team to occupy both tents comfortably. However, deteriorating weather prevented the advance party from returning, forcing eighteen climbers to squeeze into only two tents. Ten of us spent the night inside a single tent, leaving barely enough room to lie down.

Sleep became almost impossible. The thin mountain air caused breathlessness, while several climbers suffered headaches, nausea and exhaustion. Throughout the night I remained awake, monitoring my teammates and assisting those affected by altitude sickness. I myself managed barely two hours of sleep.

Outside, the relentless sound of falling rocks echoed through the darkness, reminding us that nature could change our fate within seconds. We waited anxiously for dawn, hoping for better weather and a safe continuation of the expedition.

Establishing Camp-II

On the morning of 22 August 2000, our expedition leader departed at 6:30 a.m. with the advance summit team, leaving detailed instructions with Muni. Gurdev, S. K. Yadav and Arun remained behind at Camp-I for acclimatisation, while seven of us began the demanding climb towards the proposed Camp-II at 9:30 a.m.

The route from 15,500 to 16,500 feet was perhaps the most technically demanding section we had encountered so far. The entire ascent traversed a steep rocky ridge exposed to continuous rockfall from the Ladhaki glacier. The mountains consisted largely of sedimentary rock, making every handhold and foothold unreliable. A single mistake could result in a fatal fall into the rockfall gully hundreds of feet below.

After nearly four and a half hours of painstaking climbing, we finally reached 16,500 feet. By then, Vijayanand had become seriously unwell and began vomiting due to altitude and exhaustion.

We had carried additional food, a tent, climbing equipment, plum cakes, buns and other essential supplies for establishing Camp-II. Our first instinct was to search for the advance summit party. After scanning the mountain slopes carefully, we finally spotted tiny figures nearly 1,000 feet above us attempting the summit. Silently, I prayed for their success.

Since no signal arrived from the leader to continue climbing, we decided to utilise our time by establishing Camp-II.

Selecting a campsite at this altitude was a critical decision. Halдар risked his life repeatedly to collect drinking water from the Ladhaki glacier. Muni even dug into frozen ground in search of additional water sources. After carefully studying the terrain and consulting the team, I selected the safest location available—although none could truly be called safe. Every surrounding slope remained vulnerable to rockfall, yet this site offered comparatively better protection.

For nearly two hours we levelled the uneven ridge, moving more than two quintals of rocks before finally pitching the tent securely. Even beneath the tent we could hear the sound of glacial water flowing through hidden channels beneath the rocks.

As evening approached, concern spread throughout the camp. The summit party remained out of sight, and no message had reached us. At around 5:00 p.m., the weather suddenly deteriorated. Heavy rain, hail and fierce winds engulfed the mountain, making any summit attempt virtually impossible.

Realising that fourteen climbers could not be accommodated safely inside a single tent if the advance party returned in bad weather, Muni and I decided that he would remain at Camp-II while the remaining six of us descended to Camp-I. This decision would provide additional space for the exhausted summit climbers if they returned during the night.

After an hour of careful descent, we reached Camp-I. There we learnt that Vijayanand and Sreedhar were too unwell to continue and had decided to descend to Advance Base Camp. Gurdev informed us that Shyam Sunder had arrived from ABC with another team to enquire about the welfare of both Camp-I and Camp-II, as no communication had been received for two days.

That evening we shared a simple meal of soup, tea and cake before preparing for another anxious night.

The rockfall continued relentlessly throughout the darkness. At one terrifying moment, a massive boulder crashed down just to the right of our tent—well outside the usual rockfall zone. Had its path shifted only a few metres, none of us would have survived to tell the story.

Late that evening, we were astonished to see Muni descending with Subrato. Feeling responsible for the climbers remaining at Camp-II, he intended to return immediately with two additional sleeping bags. Despite our repeated requests not to undertake the dangerous journey alone in worsening weather, he remained firm in his decision.

I admired his courage, yet deep within I feared it bordered on unnecessary risk. At that time, however, I was unaware of the specific instructions given to him by our expedition leader. Respecting his determination, we watched silently as he disappeared once again into the gathering darkness, climbing back towards Camp-II alone.

23 August 2000 – Trapped by the Mountain

I awoke that morning with renewed hope that the day would finally bring us closer to the summit. However, as I unzipped the tent flap and looked outside, that hope quickly disappeared. The mountain had transformed overnight into a world of white. Thick clouds and heavy snowfall had reduced visibility to barely 15–20 feet, making it impossible to see beyond the immediate surroundings. The silence of the previous evening had been replaced by the relentless sound of wind sweeping across the rocky ridges.

A little later, I heard voices outside. To my surprise, Sunil and Subodh emerged through the snow, descending from the upper slopes. We welcomed them eagerly, hoping for good news. Instead, I was deeply shocked to learn that Muni had lost his way the previous night while attempting to return to Camp-II. Forced to spend the entire night beneath a massive boulder—a situation mountaineers call **benightment**—he had survived one of the most dangerous experiences in high-altitude climbing. Although exhausted and physically weakened, he had fortunately been found alive. They also conveyed the leader's urgent instruction that all available members should immediately report to Camp-II.

Without wasting time, we packed essential supplies, including the stove, cooking vessels, milk powder, soup packets, buns, cakes, and drinking water, before beginning the demanding ascent. Leaving Subrato behind at Camp-I, we climbed steadily through worsening weather. After nearly two hours of strenuous climbing, we finally reached Camp-II, where the expedition leader welcomed us warmly.

I was relieved to reunite with my teammates after three difficult days, particularly Muni, whose survival felt nothing short of miraculous. The advance party had been resting, waiting for an opportunity to continue the assault on the summit. Outside, however, heavy snow continued to fall relentlessly. The small tent was overcrowded, yet everyone squeezed inside to escape the freezing conditions. Gurdev prepared hot milk for the team using the supplies we had carried. A simple meal of warm milk and buns restored our energy and lifted our spirits for a while. Nevertheless, it became increasingly obvious that the weather would not permit another summit attempt that day.

After a short rest, the leader instructed S. K. Yadav and Arun to descend to the Advance Base Camp (ABC). Meanwhile, Anupam Mukherjee was assigned to lead a six-member team consisting of myself, Gurdev, Narain, Haldar, and M. B. Singh to retrieve mountaineering equipment left higher up on the glacier before the deteriorating weather buried it beneath fresh snow.

Roped together and fully equipped with our mountaineering gear, we stepped onto the glacier amidst continuous snowfall. The temperature had fallen well below freezing despite our windproof and snowproof clothing. The first hundred feet required pure ice craft, followed by steep snow slopes where we ascended using jumars fixed to the ropes.

For me, this was one of the most memorable moments of the expedition. For the first time, I truly felt that I had entered the heart of the mountain. Fresh snow concealed dangerous crevasses beneath a deceptive white surface, forcing us to probe every step carefully with our ice axes. Towering before us stood Mount Sthitidhar, while to our right yawned an enormous ice cave. In those lonely Himalayan heights, local legends about the mysterious Yeti naturally came to mind, adding an eerie sense of mystery to the landscape.

Our canvas climbing shoes had become completely soaked, raising concerns about frostbite. Despite the harsh conditions, we paused briefly to capture a few photographs before locating and salvaging the mountaineering equipment. The worsening snowfall forced us to abandon any further work, and we immediately rappelled back towards Camp-II.

The retrieval operation had taken nearly three hours. On our return, the expedition leader, anxious about the rapidly deteriorating weather, urged us to waste no time and descend immediately to Camp-I, as Camp-II could no longer safely accommodate everyone.

The descent proved even more hazardous than the climb. Fresh snow had turned the already unstable rocky ridge into a dangerously slippery slope. Every step demanded complete concentration, as a single mistake could have resulted in a fatal fall into the rockfall zone below. After nearly an hour, we reached Camp-I safely.

Soon afterwards, Gurdev, Narain, and Halder continued their descent to the Advance Base Camp before darkness completely engulfed the mountain.

Later that evening, another team of seven climbers led by Bhaskar arrived at Camp-I. Many of them were exhausted and suffering from altitude-related illness. They had carried packets of dried rice intended for the advance party at Camp-II. Since they had not proceeded further, the food remained with them at Camp-I. After considerable persuasion, they shared one packet among M. B. Singh, Subrato, and me. Although the incident left me slightly disappointed, I reminded myself that everyone on the mountain was battling exhaustion, hunger, and uncertainty in their own way. Such moments tested not only physical endurance but also patience and humility.

By nightfall, two Vango tents stood precariously on the rocky slope of Camp-I. Outside, the wind continued to howl across the mountains, while falling rocks occasionally echoed through the darkness, reminding us that in the Himalayas, nature always commands the final word.

24 August 2000 – Rest, Recovery, and Renewed Determination

The following morning, although the weather remained unsettled, it showed signs of slight improvement. Following the expedition leader's instructions, Bhaskar and his team began their ascent towards the higher camps at first light.

Having spent several physically exhausting days above 15,000 feet, M. B. Singh, Subrato, and I decided to descend to the Advance Base Camp to replenish our strength before making another summit attempt. We were confident that with proper rest and nourishment we would return stronger the next day.

As we descended, the colourful tents of the Advance Base Camp came into view, scattered across the valley like tiny flowers against the magnificent Himalayan landscape. Along the trail, I collected a few rare alpine blossoms, including the sacred **Brahma Kamal** and **Indra Kamal**, treasures that grow only in the high Himalayas.

Before reaching camp, I paused beside the tranquil waters of Vyaskund Lake. Its emerald-green surface reflected the surrounding snow-clad peaks with breathtaking clarity. Sitting quietly on its banks, surrounded by alpine flowers and towering mountains, I experienced a rare sense of peace that momentarily erased the hardships of the expedition.

As we arrived at the Advance Base Camp around 10:30 a.m., the remaining team members greeted us warmly. Some of the younger participants even welcomed us with flowers, a simple gesture that brought immense joy after days spent battling the harsh mountain environment.

Preparations were already underway for another group to proceed towards Camp-I under the supervision of Sunil Kumar and Subodh, who would remain at ABC to coordinate the supporting party. We wished them success before settling into camp ourselves.

For the first time in several days, I was able to enjoy simple comforts that felt like luxuries in the Himalayas. I drank plenty of warm milk, followed by an unforgettable bath beneath an icy mountain stream cascading directly from the glacier above. The freezing water revived both my body and my spirit.

Throughout the day, Gurdev and S. K. prepared nourishing meals, allowing us to eat properly for the first time in days. After breakfast, lunch, and dinner, I finally felt my strength returning. The remainder of the day was spent resting, discussing the expedition with M. B. Singh, and mentally preparing ourselves for the decisive climb that awaited us.

The mountains had granted us a brief pause—not as a sign of defeat, but as an opportunity to recover, reflect, and prepare for the greatest challenge still lying ahead.

25 August 2000 – Summit Day

A Memory to Cherish Forever

I woke up early in the morning, offered my prayers to Almighty God, and opened my eyes with renewed determination. One day of complete rest at the Advance Base Camp had restored my energy. I felt a strength within me that I had never experienced before. My body was refreshed, my mind was calm, and my spirit was ready to accept any challenge the Himalayas could present.

Perhaps, for the first time in my life, I witnessed such unwavering determination within myself. I owed this inner strength to my years of martial arts training, the guidance of my Master, and the relentless challenges posed by the mountains themselves.

That morning, I did not set a target for myself. I left the decision to my inner strength. My only goal was simple—to keep climbing. How far I would go, the mountain itself would decide.

The crystal-clear Himalayan sky further strengthened my confidence. Along with Mahavir, Subrato, and S. K. Yadav, I was ready to begin the climb by 7:00 a.m. However, Gurdev was still preparing Upma for everyone at Camp-I, delaying our departure by about thirty minutes. Finally, at 7:30 a.m., we left the Advance Base Camp.

After crossing Vyaskund Lake and climbing barely a hundred metres, I gradually increased my pace and soon found myself nearly two hundred feet ahead of my companions. There was no competition in my mind. My only thought was not to waste precious time or energy. If the mountain permitted a summit attempt today, I wanted to give myself every possible opportunity.

The climb from the Advance Base Camp to Camp-I was relentless. The steep sixty-degree rocky ridge, combined with the dangerous rockfall zone, demanded complete concentration. After nearly three hours of continuous climbing, I finally reached Camp-I.

To my surprise, the Expedition Leader and Reji were there to welcome me. They immediately shared wonderful news. On 24 August 2000, after 2:30 p.m., the Leader, Reji, Anupam, and Muni had successfully summited Mount Sthitidhar.

I congratulated them wholeheartedly.

The Leader also informed me that Camp-II had been shifted down to Camp-I because a massive boulder had narrowly missed the Camp-II tents by only a few feet. Had it struck the tents, the consequences would have been disastrous. I silently thanked Almighty God for protecting the team.

I handed over the Upma that I had carried from the Advance Base Camp. After changing my sweat-soaked clothes, I sought the blessings of the Leader before immediately resuming my climb.

He looked at me and said,

"The route to the summit is now open. The fixed ropes are in place. Go and summit."

Those words filled me with renewed determination.

Barely fifty feet before reaching Camp-II, I met Sumanth, who was escorting several young participants. He requested me to accompany them because many of the children were exhausted and struggling on the steep ridge. Some were already showing signs of fatigue and altitude sickness. He asked me to advise them to return to Camp-I if they were unable to continue safely.

I encouraged the children to assess their own strength.

"If you feel confident, continue climbing. Otherwise, return safely to Camp-I."

Leaving the final decision to them, I continued towards Camp-II without delay.

I reached Camp-II at approximately 12:30 p.m., where Dhananjaya, M. B. Singh, Renuka, Ajith, Pallav, D. P. Singh, and Mishra warmly welcomed me.

Although I had climbed continuously from the Advance Base Camp through Camp-I without stopping, I knew this was not the time to rest. I drank some water, ate a chocolate bar, took a Spirulina capsule, gathered every ounce of my remaining energy, and within fifteen minutes was ready once again.

Dhananjaya led our group towards the base of Mount Sthitidhar. We roped ourselves together in full mountaineering equipment.

Dhananjaya led the team, I followed immediately behind him, followed by Miss Renuka and the remaining climbers.

Before proceeding further, I quietly asked Lal whether Miss Renuka would be able to negotiate the difficult climb ahead. He confidently replied that she could, and we continued together.

The route now demanded every mountaineering skill we possessed—rock craft, ice craft, and snow craft. Using ice axes, fixed ropes, and careful traverses across crevasses, we slowly climbed towards the base

of the summit wall. Throughout the climb, Miss Renuka displayed remarkable courage, although she frequently required assistance to negotiate the difficult sections.

When we reached the base of the summit ridge, I witnessed an inspiring sight.

The Leader and Reji had already fixed approximately **840 feet of climbing rope** to the summit.

Several climbers were already on the summit, while many others patiently waited for their opportunity to ascend. Shyam, Subodh, Sunil, and Bhaskar could be seen standing proudly on the summit ridge.

Only one rope had been fixed to the final two-hundred-foot rock face, which rose at an angle of nearly fifty to sixty degrees. Every climber had to wait patiently for his turn before beginning the demanding jumar ascent.

I reached this point at approximately **2:30 p.m.**

Dhananjaya moved away to continue his assigned duties with the Advance Party.

Although I had climbed continuously for nearly eight hours from the Advance Base Camp, no one offered me an earlier opportunity to climb. The younger climbers politely explained that they had themselves been waiting for over two hours.

For a brief moment, disappointment entered my mind.

I asked myself whether my three nights of waiting, my repeated ferrying between Camp-I and Camp-II, carrying food, water, stove, equipment, and helping establish Camp-II had all been in vain.

Had I not contributed to preparing the route that everyone was now using?

Yet mountains teach patience before they reward perseverance.

I accepted the situation without complaint and quietly waited.

It was Bhaskar who finally insisted that I should be allowed to climb. Pati graciously sacrificed his own turn for me. I shall always remain grateful for that gesture.

Silently, I prayed once more—not only to Almighty God, but also to Mount Sthitidhar herself—to grant me permission to stand upon her summit.

Finally, at **4:27 p.m.**, with encouragement from Sunil and Lal, I completed the final two-hundred-foot jumar ascent and stepped onto the summit of **Mount Sthitidhar**.

At that unforgettable moment, a dream that had survived two previous failures finally became reality.

Words cannot adequately describe what I felt.

I stood on the summit beside Dhananjaya and Shyam Sunder, proudly holding the ASAI Flag. A photograph captured that historic moment forever.

From the Advance Base Camp to the summit, I had climbed continuously for nearly **twelve hours**.

It remains one of the most demanding and satisfying achievements of my mountaineering career.

Standing on the summit, I offered my heartfelt gratitude to my Martial Arts training, my Master, my inner strength, the mountain, the favourable weather, the Expedition Leader, Reji, the Advance Party, and every member of the expedition who had contributed, directly or indirectly, to my success.

For nearly ninety minutes, I remained on the summit, absorbing every moment.

The endless snow-covered peaks of the mighty Zanskar Range stretched in every direction like an ocean of white. It felt as though I had reached heaven itself.

I was the second-last climber to summit that day. The final climber was S. V. Kumar. Altogether, **fourteen climbers successfully summited Mount Sthitidhar.**

Yet, amidst the joy of success, I also felt sadness for those who had reached the base but could not summit because of deteriorating weather or lack of time. A part of me even wondered whether Pati might have lost his own opportunity because he had allowed me to go ahead. That thought remained with me even while standing on the summit.

Soon afterwards, the Leader ordered the immediate retrieval of all climbing equipment before darkness and worsening weather made the descent impossible.

Working as a coordinated team, Dhananjaya and I remained at the top while Sunil, Shyam, Lal, and Kumar positioned themselves lower on the face. We carefully dismantled the fixed ropes using clutch hitches and choke knots, rappelled section by section, removed pitons, recovered every climbing rope possible, and finally left only a single piton behind.

The equipment salvage was completed successfully, and we congratulated one another before beginning the long descent.

By then it was nearly **6:30 p.m.**, and darkness had already descended over the mountain.

At the base of the summit wall, I found Miss Renuka waiting alone.

She was trembling with cold and fear, unable to continue by herself. She explained that she had deliberately waited for senior climbers to accompany her down the glacier.

Recognising the danger, I immediately asked Rajeev and Panda to escort her safely. Throughout the descent she struggled greatly, often crawling across icy sections instead of walking. We continuously encouraged her to keep moving despite exhaustion.

Panda repeatedly motivated her with the words,

"Jeeyenge, Marenge Saath Saath."
"We shall live together, and if fate decides, we shall face it together."

His words gave everyone renewed courage.

Darkness made navigation extremely difficult. As I led the twelve-member team, I deliberately kept everyone towards the right side of the ridge to avoid the notorious Ladakhi Bursund rockfall zone on the left.

The cairns marking the route had disappeared beneath darkness, and the loose scree made every step uncertain. At one point, I feared we might unknowingly drift into the dangerous rockfall area, forcing me to alter our course even further to the right.

Far below, faint torchlights flashed from Camp-I, guiding us safely through the darkness.

Finally, at **8:42 p.m.**, after one of the longest and most demanding days of my life, we reached Camp-I.

I had climbed continuously for nearly **thirteen hours without food**.

The Expedition Leader had been deeply worried about our delayed return. Instead of congratulating us, he questioned us sternly for nearly thirty minutes regarding our delayed descent and the risks we had taken.

At that moment, although physically exhausted, I understood that his reprimand reflected not anger but responsibility.

That unforgettable day taught me one of the greatest lessons of mountaineering:

The summit is never the end of the climb. The real success lies in returning safely with every member of the team.

26–29 August 2000

The Journey Home – A Farewell to the Himalayas

26 August 2000 – Retreat to Advance Base Camp

The morning of 26 August marked the beginning of our retreat from Camp-I. At around 10:30 a.m., we dismantled our camp and commenced our descent towards Advance Base Camp (ABC). The mountains that had tested every ounce of our physical strength and mental determination now watched us quietly as we retraced our steps.

By evening we reached ABC, situated at an altitude of approximately 12,500 feet. A memorable campfire was organized, where the youngest members of the expedition—thirteen-year-old Priyanka and Vani—had the honour of lighting the ceremonial fire. Their youthful enthusiasm brought warmth and joy to everyone after days of hardship amidst snow, rocks, and glaciers.

The evening passed with songs, laughter, and shared memories of the expedition. Before retiring for the night around midnight, Sunil conveyed the Leader's message that a special Martial Arts practice session would be conducted at 7:00 a.m. the following morning. The announcement filled me with excitement, for it promised to unite two of my greatest passions—mountaineering and martial arts.

27 August 2000 – Martial Arts in the Himalayas

I woke up at 6:00 a.m. and spent a few peaceful moments interacting with a local shepherd near his mountain hut. Life in the Himalayas appeared simple, yet deeply connected with nature.

Soon afterwards, our expedition leader conducted a unique Taekwondo and Kenbudo training session amidst the majestic Himalayan surroundings. Nearly forty-five martial artists, including sixteen Black Belts, enthusiastically participated. Being the senior-most martial artist (Zen) in the expedition, I experienced immense satisfaction standing among fellow practitioners in such an extraordinary setting.

The session lasted from 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Practising martial arts at an altitude of 12,500 feet was an unforgettable experience. Every technique demanded greater lung capacity, balance, endurance, and mental focus. For me, this became one of the finest moments of the entire expedition. The physical exertion dissolved all accumulated stress, while the tranquil environment filled my heart with profound happiness and peace.

Following the practice session, it was decided to celebrate the successful completion of the expedition with a traditional mutton curry. After breakfast, consisting of Upma, Bhaskar, Subrato, Sumanth, Mr. Jha, and I proceeded to a shepherd's settlement to purchase a goat.

After lengthy negotiations, we successfully bought one. During the butchering process, an unfortunate accident occurred when a rolling stone crushed the toe of D.P. Singh. Despite his painful injury, he displayed remarkable courage and refused to complain. The entire process took nearly three hours. Later, Sumanth and I returned to the shepherd's cottage to settle the payment, where the shepherd graciously offered us freshly prepared rotis and curd—simple food served with genuine mountain hospitality.

Meanwhile, the weather began deteriorating rapidly. A foreign mountaineering team arrived and established their camp nearby. Shortly afterwards, our own camp dismantling commenced. Many climbers questioned the decision to retreat under such adverse weather conditions, but mountain leadership often demands difficult decisions based on safety rather than emotions.

As we descended from Vyaskund around 12:30 p.m., the Himalayas once again revealed their unpredictable nature. Heavy rain and hailstorms reduced visibility to barely thirty feet. The temperature dropped close to freezing, while the Beas River swelled into a dangerous torrent. The glacier became extremely slippery, hidden crevasses posed constant danger, and the entire valley disappeared beneath thick clouds.

Several times I slipped on the wet rocks, but fortunately escaped without injury. D.P. Singh, despite his crushed toe and continuous bleeding, refused every offer of assistance—even from young Vinay. Displaying extraordinary determination, he completed the entire trek to Dundi on his own. His courage and mental toughness earned my deepest respect. Upon reaching Dundi, I administered first aid to his injured foot.

Leader approved a campsite selected by Lal, although personally I found Dundi to be the least comfortable campsite of the entire expedition. Yet even difficult places create beautiful memories. That evening we gathered around another lively campfire, enjoying delicious mutton curry and sharing stories over a small peg of rum with Panda, Sumanth, M.B. Singh, and Gurdev. Hardships had transformed into friendships that would last a lifetime.

28 August 2000 – Farewell to the Himalayas

This was our final trekking day. At 9:30 a.m., we began our journey towards Solang Nallah.

Leaving the Himalayas was emotionally difficult. Every step away from those magnificent mountains felt as though I was leaving behind a part of my soul. Nature displayed its finest beauty throughout the descent—towering pine forests, roaring streams, mist-covered cliffs, and countless wildflowers accompanied us until the very end.

Along the way, Sirohi joined me, followed later by Miss Renuka. During our conversation, she hesitated to acknowledge the assistance she had received from Panda and Rajeev during the difficult descent from Camp-II. I firmly but respectfully encouraged her to mention their invaluable support in her debrief report. Recognising the help received during difficult moments is itself a mark of true mountaineering character.

At the same time, I appreciated her determination and admired the courage shown by all the young participants who had climbed to such great heights.

Upon reaching Solang Nallah, we refreshed ourselves and enjoyed a satisfying meal. At 6:00 p.m., our bus arrived to take us back. We departed Manali around 9:30 p.m. for New Delhi.

During the journey, my first telephone call was to my wife. The moment she heard my voice, she burst into tears of relief, having spent many anxious days worrying about my safety. Later that night, I called my parents, my in-laws, and other family members to inform them of my successful summit. Their joy and blessings made my achievement even more meaningful. I dedicated my success to their unwavering faith, prayers, and love.

29 August 2000 – Return to Civilization

We reached New Delhi in the morning and reported to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. During the evening gathering at Sareen Hall, our expedition leader distributed participation certificates and delivered an inspiring address, appreciating the courage, discipline, and teamwork demonstrated throughout the expedition.

That night I spoke to my wife once again. This time there were no tears—only happiness, pride, and heartfelt congratulations.

Conclusion

A Memory That Will Last Forever

Although the expedition officially ended, my heart remained in the Himalayas.

Even while travelling back to Bangalore aboard the Rajdhani Express, my thoughts wandered continuously to the summit of Mount Sthitidhar. The majestic mountains had become far more than a destination—they had become a part of my soul.

The Himalayas are beyond description. Their beauty cannot truly be understood through photographs, books, or stories. It must be experienced personally. Standing amidst snow-clad peaks, hearing the eternal music of the Beas River, listening to the thunder of avalanches, watching countless waterfalls descend from impossible heights, and witnessing clouds dance with sunlight over endless mountain ranges—all these moments remain engraved forever in my memory.

The mystical emerald waters of Vyaskund Lake, where Maharshi Vyas is believed to have composed the Mahabharata, added a spiritual dimension to the expedition. The carpets of alpine flowers, drifting fog, towering glaciers, and untouched wilderness created a landscape that seemed closer to heaven than earth.

No vocabulary can adequately describe the emotions one experiences while living among these mountains. The Himalayas humble every climber. They teach patience, discipline, courage, teamwork, humility, and respect for nature.

Our expedition was not limited to climbing Mount Sthitidhar. We also participated in environmental conservation by cleaning Himalayan trails, collecting specimens of alpine flora and fauna for study, and

conducting practical Martial Arts training at an altitude of 12,500 feet to test endurance, lung capacity, and mental resilience.

The summit was only one achievement.

The true victory was discovering the immense strength hidden within ourselves.

The Himalayas gave me memories that time can never erase—memories that will remain with me for the rest of my life.

Expedition Summary

Peak Climbed: Mount Sthitidhar (5,370 metres)

Expedition Duration: 15–29 August 2000

Highest Altitude Achieved: 5,370 metres

Total Distance Trekged: Approximately 50 kilometres

River Crossed: Beas River

Number of Ferries to Camp-I: 2

Number of Ferries to Camp-II: 3

Best Achievement: Continuous climb from Advance Base Camp to the summit of Mount Sthitidhar on 25 August 2000.

Most Memorable Moment: Standing on the summit after years of preparation and two earlier unsuccessful attempts.

Greatest Danger: A massive boulder narrowly missed our tent at Camp-I during the night of 23 August.

Most Beautiful Location: Vyaskund Lake.

Greatest Regret: Watching several deserving climbers miss the opportunity to summit due to time constraints and rapidly deteriorating weather.

Most Admired Committee Member: Mr. Jha, for his outstanding dedication and leadership.

Final

Reflection:

Mountains never belong to those who conquer them. They belong to those who respect them. The summit may last only a few moments, but the lessons learned in the Himalayas remain for a lifetime.

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17 from State climb Himalayas for taekwondo

Express News Service

Hangalore, Sept 13: Glimbing mountain peaks is tough. Practising Tackwone at 16,000 feet above sea level in an environment low in oxygen, is tougher. But that's what a 56-member team from the Adventure Sports Association of India did.

Seventeen people from Karnataka were part of a 56-member team that summited three peaks - Shishu-tadi, Ladaki and Friendship in the Doldar range of the Himalayas in Kamachal Pradesh between 26 and 28 August, 2010. They completed



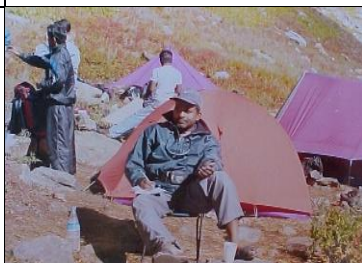
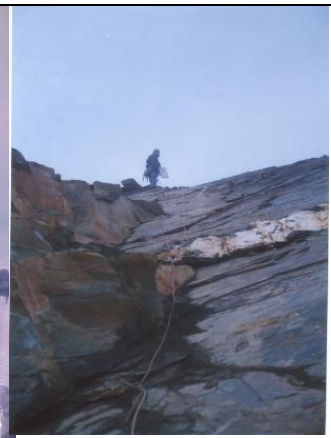
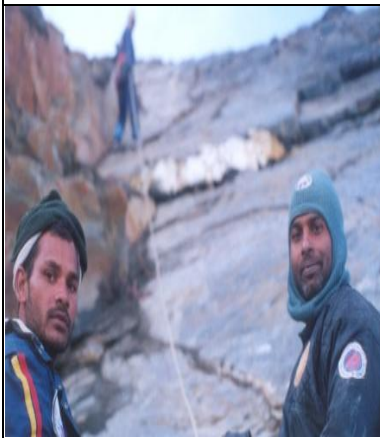
TOP OF THE WORLD: (Left) Governor V S Rama Devi seen with the team from the Adventure Sports Association of India that scaled Himalayan peaks to practise martial arts. (Right) Jubilant team members after a rewarding climb

Babu T Raghu, secretary of the association. He is also a national champion in martial arts and was keen on practicing the art in the mountains, says A Lenka, a member of the expedition.

BEL Vidyalyaya.
Eight members were from the Indian Air Force, Bangalore Training Command. The children were part of scouts and guides groups and had been trained for one year in

The Union Sports Minister, Sukhdev Singh Dhinsa had flagged off the expedition from New Delhi on Aug 16

"The group was a large one because we wanted to give an opportunity to many people to take part in the expedition," said A. Lenka, who is also a member of the association and the expedition.



Chapter VII

Mount Rudugaira Expedition (2001)

Into the Heart of the Gangotri Himalayas (18,500 ft)

"The higher we climb, the quieter the world becomes, and in that silence, we discover our true strength."

The year **2001** marked another defining chapter in my Himalayan journey with the expedition to **Mount Rudugaira**, situated in the magnificent **Gangotri region of Uttarakhand**. Rising to an altitude of approximately **18,500 feet (5,640 metres)**, Mount Rudugaira stands amidst one of the most spectacular and spiritually significant mountain landscapes in the Indian Himalayas. Surrounded by towering snow-clad peaks, massive glaciers, and pristine alpine valleys, the mountain offers not only a demanding mountaineering challenge but also an inspiring environment for self-discovery and inner reflection.

The approach to Mount Rudugaira begins from the sacred town of **Gangotri**, revered as one of the holiest pilgrimage sites in India and traditionally regarded as the origin of the River Ganga. As the expedition progresses beyond the temple town, civilisation gradually disappears, giving way to dense pine and birch forests, alpine meadows, glacial moraines, icy streams, and expansive snowfields. The landscape transforms into a world where nature reigns supreme, demanding complete respect, discipline, and adaptability from every mountaineer.

The climb to Rudugaira is physically demanding and technically challenging. Steep rocky ridges, unstable moraine, glacier crossings, snow-covered slopes, and high-altitude camps test every aspect of a climber's endurance. At elevations approaching **18,500 feet**, reduced oxygen levels significantly increase physical exertion, making even routine tasks require careful pacing and controlled breathing. Temperatures frequently fall well below freezing, while rapidly changing weather, strong mountain winds, and occasional snowfall remind every expedition member that success depends upon preparation, teamwork, and sound judgment.

For me, Mount Rudugaira represented far more than another Himalayan summit. It became a living laboratory where the principles of martial arts, military discipline, and mountain survival naturally converged. Every step demanded balance, every breath required awareness, and every decision reflected the martial values of patience, precision, courage, and self-control. The mountain reinforced my growing belief that true martial arts are not confined to techniques performed inside a dojo but are fully realised when the body, mind, and spirit function in complete harmony with nature.

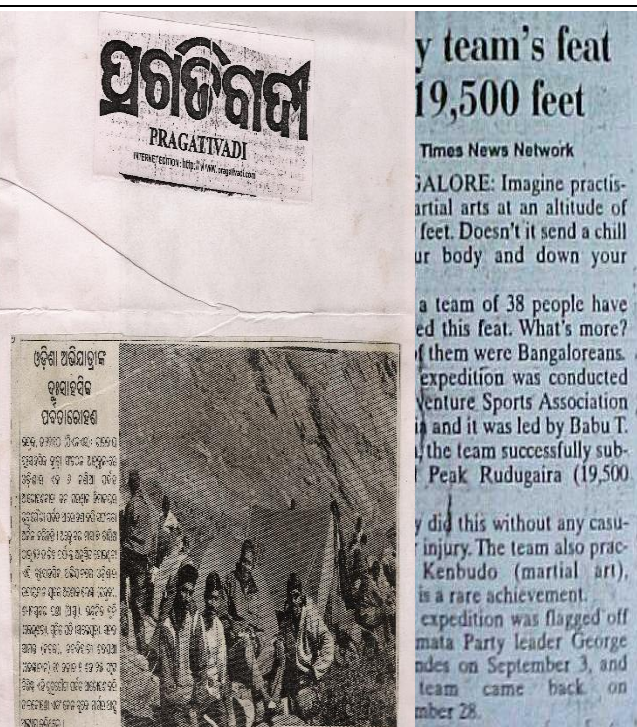
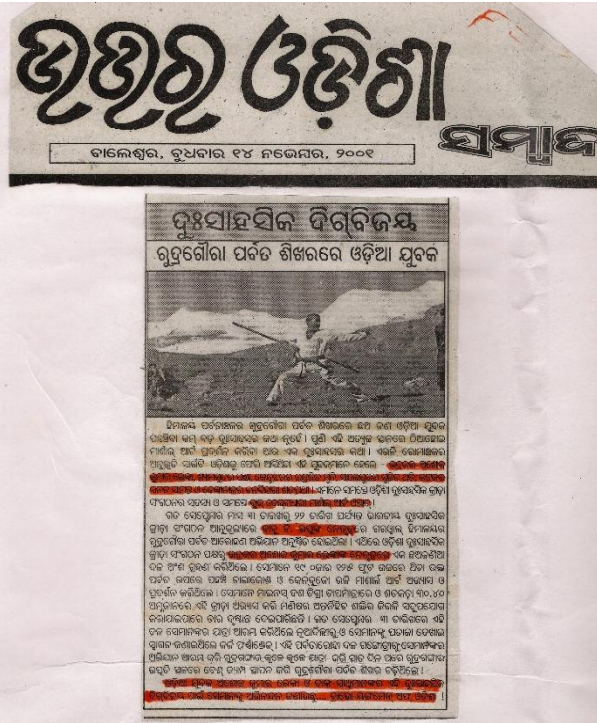
The expedition also strengthened my appreciation for the profound connection between the Himalayas and the ancient traditions of meditation and self-discipline. The deep silence of the Gangotri region, broken only by the sound of flowing glaciers and mountain winds, created an atmosphere that encouraged introspection and mindfulness. Each day became a lesson in humility, reminding me that mountains are never conquered; they simply allow respectful climbers to experience their greatness.

The Mount Rudugaira Expedition became another important milestone in my continuing exploration of **Mountain Martial Arts**. It demonstrated that physical endurance alone is never sufficient to overcome high-altitude challenges. Success depends equally upon mental resilience, disciplined breathing, teamwork, environmental awareness, and unwavering determination. These timeless lessons would continue to influence my future expeditions and eventually become an integral part of my own philosophy of teaching martial arts through nature.

As I stood amidst the majestic peaks of the Gangotri Himalayas, I realised once again that every mountain offers two journeys—one towards the summit and another towards the discovery of oneself. It is the second journey that leaves the deepest and most enduring mark upon the heart of a true warrior.

2001 | Mount Rudugaira (18,500 ft)

- **Range:** Garhwal Range, Himalayas.
- **Flagged Off By:** Shri George Fernandes (Then Defence Minister).
- **Climate:** Glacial terrain and steep ice walls.
- **Internal Practice:** Taekwondo leg-conditioning on vertical inclines; used Lung (Vital Wind) to optimize oxygen intake during heavy technical climbs.





REPORT ON EXPEDITION TO MOUNT RUDUGAIRA 19,125 FT

Mount Rudugaira situated in the Garwal Ranges of the Himalayas in the state of Uttaranchal at an altitude of 19,125 ft. Climb starts from Gangotri (10,500ft) . The climb continues besides Rudraganga River via Rudugaira Kharak to the Burgsund of Rudraganga. In this region some of the reputed peaks are Gangotri I, II, III & Jogini Massif. Adventure Sports Association of India, Bangalore, sponsored the climb. The leader of the expedition was Mr. Babu T Raghu Sec ASAI.

OBJECTIVE

- *To Summit the Peak*
- *To Practice Kenbudo(Martial Arts) at various heights of Himalayas*
- *To subject body & mind to esoteric Buddhist Meditation & Zen Philosophy under sub-zero temperature and partial oxygen availability.*

MOVEMENT

01 Sep 01: A/D hours moved out of 37 Sqn, Air Force.

02 Sep 01: Evening boarded Bikaner Mail and reached New Delhi on 03 Sep 01 morning.

FLAG OFF

03 Sep 01: Reported to Adventure Sports Association of India, C/O IMF, South Campus, New Delhi. In the evening a team of 42 ASAI members under the leadership of Mr. Babu T Raghu 8th Dan Black Belt, Founder of Kenbudo in India, Leader of 24 expeditions, Secretary ASAI, was ***flagged off by Ex-Union minister for Defence Mr George Fernandez. His message to the team was " Take a good look at the Himalayas, They need our protection even as they protect us. All the best and come back Safe"***.

TEAM COMPOSITION

- Total Team Members : 41 Men & 01 Woman
- Total groups : 08
- States Represented : 12
- Names of Groups : Bodidharma, Nagarjuna, Naropa, Sariputra, Diznaga,
 - Dipankara, Asanga, Silabadra, Aswaghosha.
- No of Martial Artiest : 30
- No of Black Belts : 15
- Martial Art Practiced : Taekwondo & Kenbudo

TRANSPORTATION

04 Sep 01: Evening, ASAI team boarded the deluxe bus from ISBT, New Delhi to Gangotri via Rishikesh. At Rishikesh we were delayed by few hours due to a massive landslide. Vehicular traffic resumed after 06 hours of BRO 's operation to set up the road.

05 Sep 01: Reached Gangotri in the evening. Team hired porters & mules & spent a night over here.

EXPEDITION

06 Sep 01: First day of expedition. Team was in very high morale. I was group leader of Nagarjuna. We packed our equipment, Ration & luggage. Collected information about peak, route, climate & etc from locals at Gangotri. At 1130hrs team set out to Rudugaira Kharak for setting up transit camp. The distance to the transit camp was 8-12kms. Height gain was 3000ft approx. I was guideman with porters and mules. *The trek was on a very narrow goat path on the ridge adjacent to Rudraganga River. A small slip of your feet may take you to the Rocky River; which has a 50ft of sharp descent from the route. The goat path several places have washed off due to landslides. So all together the initial phase of trek was breath stopping and exhaustive.* I was the first man to arrive at Rudugaira Kharak (12,800ft) with porters and four member of expedition. It was 1530hrs. Here I met a two member Bengali team who was on the way to climb Gangotri III. Since the climate was getting worse so I went out for survey to set up Transit camp. I found a lovely location, hopefully earlier expeditions must have camped over here. It satisfied me from every direction for a better camping site. Except the water availability which was little far than usual. But since the team was large I chosen the place for camping. Then I asked fellow mates to pitch the tent, fetch water and put a fire on for left over teams navigation. By 1700hrs all arrived at transit camp.

07 Sep 01: We are at 12800ft . The day was dedicated to acclimatisation. Expedition leader decided to subject the Kenbudo participant to high altitude practice. ***High altitude Martial arts practice is generally termed as Tsumo & Longum. Ancient Budhist monks such as Naropa, Mailarespa & Naljorspa used to practice this sports on those days.*** The participants were informed who got geared up in traditional Martial Arts dress. On morning & evening practice sessions we under went 02 hours of practice of Forms, Sparring, and Weapons & followed by a 30 minutes of vipasana meditation. After the practice we find that those who suffered from mountain sickness recovered. Again the whole team except a few odd were full of energy. ***The day was spent on, lectures delivered by master leader "On origin of Martial arts & its philosophy", study on mountaineering & planning for the further climb.***

08 Sep 01: Today also we did not climb up. We spent the day in same way as on 07 Sep 01, practising martial arts (Kenbudo). ***By subjecting my body to Tsumo & Longun with partial Oxygen availability I could have self-analysation & self-realisation of my internal energy (Ki). Biologically I could subject my lungs & heart to a heavy load thereby I could prove my lungs capacity & finally I was aware that this will result in improving my RBC counts & branching out of New Capillaries. It is great when you know the truth & do the things in a right way. The credit goes to the master leader only. No doubt it surprises the inhabitant & the other mountaineers of the region since they are ignorant of the fact.***

09 Sep 01: Today leaving few climbers, who were affected by mountain sickness, the team took up the climb to set up Base Camp at 15, 800 ft. ***Generally the mountaineering groups are small but our team was so large that it looked as if a small village is moving in Himalayas.*** For today's climb I was end man. After clearing off whole lot of garbage, burnt and ditched them & then I took up the climb. We were really energetic & enthusiastic to have a glimpse of the Mount Rudugaira. But the very first phase of climb today posed resistant to our climbers with 65-70 degree of steep climb for 300ft. Which discouraged many of the firsttimer's but they were never lost. There were a total of three to four humps we were to cross to reach to Base Camp. Each hump had a descend of 50-60 degree approx. 400-500ft & a ascend of 65-75 degree approx. 400 - 800 ft. Each hump was taking out all our stamina & energy. I recollected my master leader few words ***" Being Martial Artiest defeating human being is no victory to test your strength you should try to defeat the Nature". Really it's difficult to beat Nature. But these words gave me more encouragement & strength to Climb. The weather was sunny. The climb was tough & enjoyable. Weight carried was approx. 25 Kg by each climber.*** Many of the climbers were slow & exhausted I never stopped for rest & was in constant rhythm or pace & reached at Base Camp at 1600hrs I was welcomed by leader & few climbers. ***It was a lovely meadow at the backdrop of mount Gangotri I, II, III, Mount Rudugaira, Jogini Massif, bursund of Rudra Ganga & Gangotri Glacier. Leader selected the area for camping.***

The last climber to reach the BC was 1730hrs. After setting up the camp the major constraint was fetching of water for the team. After a hurried survey we decided to fetch water from the bursund of Rudraganga. Which was very dirty. But immediately there was no choice for the team but to filter out the water for consumption. Almost all rapids of the region were dried up. So without good water the survival was little difficult. We planned for a nice survey for water tomorrow.

10 Sep 01: At 15, 800 ft. Today, with morning sun many including me were busy in photography. Many were affected by mountain sickness. I was fine except a little migraine. Despite all these odds Taekwondoin joined for a practice session at the venue located by leader. We had a good practice of 02 hours of Kenbudo. *At this height the night temperature was approx. 2 degree Celsius with a 50% of normal oxygen availability we experimented the martial arts practice then followed by a 30mins of meditation. After the practice a rest of 02 hrs & then leaving sick members at Base camp the team set out for a climb to 17000ft for route recce & further camp setting up.* Some climbers were sent to survey for nice water source. A climb of 150ft to the right of Base Camp and then a descend of 50ft takes you to a nice brute line. After setting up a nice route upto 17,000ft. We could find an old camping site but we surveyed around for water source, which we could not find. So we decided too not to camp & come back to BC. Today climb had steep climb of the first hump from the BC, which is at a gradient of 70-degree approx., & height of climb of first hump was 1000ft.

11 Sep 01: Today, another team made recce upto 17,500 ft & came back in the evening. So a highway was set up upto 17,500 ft. I took full rest for the day. Due to the non-availability of water in the Camp I & II altitudes leader & we decided not to set up the camp at the higher ridges. *So we with leader came to an unanimous decision to put our endurance & body to higher degree of test by attempting the peak at once from the Base on 12 Sep 01. Height gain will be 3,325 ft. A nice plan of climb was chalked out. The route of climb, pace & weather pattern was well discussed.* Night weather was not good. With a hope that weather will open up in the morning we went asleep.

SUMMITING DAY

12 Sep 01: *It was a day of memory to cherish forever since on this date I enjoyed the victory over the mountain. When on the peak the climate was worst a heavy snowfall with a mild wind blow the valley was white out. Whole highway was full of snow. Visibility turned to 10 ft. Temperature was approximately minus 10 deg. I felt as if I am on a plane since the entire scenery was blocked by the weather. Though the scenery was blocked but I could enjoy the life-threatening thrill, which this Rudugaira gave at its peak due to the worst weather. My happiness knew no bound. A proud of assaulting another peak. At this weather also the climbers have never lost their heart. I was welcoming them on the peak at regular intervals. A total of 28 summited the peak today. A total of 06 climbers including me practised martial arts and meditation for 06 long hours at the summit.*

I closed the peak & called off summing at 1410hrs due to heavy snow fall. 07climbers who were 500 - 600ft below the summit were to return back. I was last man to descend down from the peak. Still the weather was same. Ist hump & IInd hump at a height of 16,800ft & 17,500ft & at a gradient of 60deg & 75deg respectively gave almost same resistant while climbing as well as descending. While climbing I preferred anaerobic & while descending it was perfect slippery and there was so much load on that it was hesitant to descend. I slipped many a time & was able to arrest myself by Ice axe. Reached Base camp at 1700hrs. *A total climb & descend of 6, 650 ft in one day is great in mountaineering which I feel no other team can do. The credit goes to our Master & Martial Arts. Even at Base camp it was snowing whole night. Here I was enjoying the tiredness out of the victory over the mountain.*

After the 1998 Sinla Pass, 1999 Mount Bhagirathi, 2000 Mount Friendship for which was I sent on T/D its this year I made it to Mount Rudugaira. I have kept up the Glory of Indian Air Force. While on summit I perfectly remembered the slogan of IAF i.e " Touch the Sky with Glory".

13 Sep 01: Today morning the weather was worst due to yesterday's snowing. At around 1000hrs the weather opened up snow all around our Base Camp melted out. We all came out of tent to glance at the

peak and share the happiness of yesterday's summiting. The Rudugaira was covered with snow & cloud. Today we took rest & studied flora & fauna of the region.

FLORA & FAUNA

Flora: I found certain rare brid of floras in this region & at this altitude. They were ***Bramahkamal***, ***Neelkamal*** & a cricket ball size white coloured ***Himalayan Mushroom***. Which locals say is poisonous. I caught them to my cameras & brought some of them to my home.

Fauna: The only fauna we could spot is ***Mountain Barhls***.

14 & 15 Sep 01: By sumitting the peak our first objective of expedition was over. Leader decided to take up the second & third objectives in more extensive way in the days to come. These two days we under went Kenbudo practice & meditation at Base Camp (15, 800 ft). It was a great high altitude training. ***In my life first time I took bath at 16, 000ft & felt as if my skin & body had a rebirth.***

16 Sep 01: After two days of practice at 15, 800ft. Today we decided to descend down to 12, 800 ft. After the morning practice we unwounded the camp & descended down & set up the camp at, which was our transit base while climbing. By this time we already started enjoying the mountain in our ways. By evening the camp was set up and Kitchen was active.

17 Sep 01: At this height since the nice water source was available so nice food was supplied to the participants. They were more energetic. Master increased the practice load & meditation time. We enjoyed and mountain sickness was slowly disappearing. Here again a good day of schedule. We are at 12, 800ft. Morning 0430hrs the Kenbudo practice began which ended up at 0630hrs then 0630hrs to 0730hrs we underwent Vipasana meditation. Afterwards two more schedule of practice was conducted at 1000hrs to 1200hrs & 1600hrs to 1800hrs.

18 Sep 01: Today after the morning session leader asked the climbers to unwind the transit camp and descend to Pandav Gufa (10, 500ft). By evening we have set up camp at Pandav Gufa. As it is near Gangotri so in the evening climbers could make calls to their home & ease the relatives from anxiety.

19 Sep 01: Again a day of same practice and meditation. Here I have collected some beautiful pine fruits & Bhoj Leaves in which ancient literature used to be written. Here I met a IMF sponsored ladies team lead by Miss Lata Joshi to climb Gangotri I. I informed them about the weather on the mountain.

20 Sep 01: Rest & final unwinding day.

21 Sep 01: Early morning boarded the bus to New Delhi.

22 Sep 01: Today early hours we reached at ISBT then at 0800hrs at IMF.

CONCLUSION

After completing the formalities of Association such as the Equipment Return, Medical Check up, Debrief of Expedition, Press Briefing , Certificate & Memento distribution at IMF. I was cleared off from ASAI & sent back to 37 Sqn, AF on 07 Oct 01. On Air Force Day I reported to my unit.

Chapter – VIII

2001–2008 | Extreme Terrain Adaptability

From the Himalayas to the Thar Desert (2001–2008)

"A true warrior is not shaped by one landscape alone. He learns to adapt, survive, and excel in every terrain that nature presents."

Until the year 2000, my journey had been largely devoted to the mountains, dense jungles, glaciers, and high-altitude expeditions of the Himalayas and the Western Ghats. Each expedition strengthened my conviction that nature is the greatest martial arts academy, where every environment teaches unique lessons in endurance, discipline, awareness, and self-mastery. However, I gradually realised that if martial arts were truly a science of survival and human excellence, then training could not remain confined to a single geographical setting.

Nature presents countless environments, each demanding different physical abilities, mental resilience, and survival strategies. A martial artist who learns only in the mountains may struggle in the desert. Likewise, one accustomed only to forests may find high-altitude conditions overwhelming. True mastery lies in adaptability—the ability to remain calm, efficient, and resilient regardless of climate, terrain, or circumstance.

This understanding inspired me to broaden my field of learning beyond the Himalayan ranges. Between **2001 and 2008**, I consciously sought training and expeditions across some of India's most challenging natural landscapes. From the freezing glaciers of the north to the scorching deserts of the west, from dense tropical forests to rocky plateaus and remote wilderness, every expedition became another chapter in understanding how the human body and mind respond to changing environments.

Among these diverse experiences, the **Thar Desert Expeditions (2001–2003)** became particularly significant. The desert presented a challenge entirely opposite to the Himalayas. Instead of freezing temperatures and oxygen-deficient air, the Thar demanded survival amidst intense heat, relentless sunlight, dehydration, shifting sand dunes, and vast open landscapes where shade was scarce and distances were deceptive. Every step across loose sand required greater physical effort, while the blazing sun tested endurance, concentration, and emotional control.

The desert taught lessons that no mountain could offer. It demanded careful management of water, energy, and time. It required patience instead of haste, conservation instead of excess, and strategic thinking rather than brute strength. Navigation relied not upon marked trails but upon observation, orientation, and an intimate understanding of the landscape. It became another living classroom where martial principles such as balance, timing, situational awareness, controlled breathing, and disciplined movement found practical application under extreme climatic conditions.

As a martial artist and an Air Warrior, these expeditions reinforced my belief that the true purpose of training is to prepare oneself for any environment and any challenge. The body must be conditioned to endure hardship, the mind must remain composed under stress, and the spirit must possess the courage to move forward despite uncertainty. Whether crossing glaciers at 18,000 feet or walking across burning desert sands under the midday sun, the same timeless principles apply—discipline, adaptability, perseverance, and respect for nature.

Throughout these years, I continued integrating the scientific principles of Taekwondo, military training, yoga, meditation, controlled breathing, and wilderness survival into a unified approach that I had begun to recognise as **Mountain and Nature-Based Martial Arts**. Every new environment expanded my understanding of human potential and strengthened my conviction that nature remains the greatest teacher of resilience.

The chapters that follow chronicle my expeditions across the **Thar Desert** and other extreme terrains between **2001 and 2008**. They are not merely accounts of travel or adventure but records of lessons learned from some of the harshest environments on Earth. Together, they illustrate that the ultimate warrior is not defined by physical strength alone, but by the ability to adapt, endure, and remain in harmony with every force of nature.

2001–2003 | Thar Desert Expeditions

- **Location:** Air Force Station, Nal Bikaner.
- **Climate:** Scorching heat (+45°C), dehydration risk, and blinding sandstorms.
- **Internal Practice:** Taekwondo stance stability in shifting sands; used Lung-gom to regulate metabolic heat and conserve water.



THUR DESERT TREK REPORT

Name of desert: Thur,
Date : 24th Feb 2002, Sunday
Starting Time : 0700 Hrs Morning
Members Participated : 22
Leader : Ashok K Lenka

II Dan Black Belt

*Climber of Mount Bhagirathi,
 Stithidhari, Sinla & Rudugaira*

Food Incharge : Mr. Niranjana Behera

Equipment i/c : Mr. Debender Kumar

Wild life & Environment : Mr. Kailash

Expert

Safety & Security : Leader

District : Bikaner, Rajasthan

Distance covered : Approx 30 kms

Finishing Time : 1600 Hrs evening

Adult - 06, Children-16

Deputy Leader : Indrajit Muni

I Dan Black Belt

*Climber of Mount Bhagirathi,
 Stithidhari, Sinla & Rudugaira*

Cooking i/c : Mr. Anil K Singh

Entertainment : Mr. Suresh

Camp Site Cleaning: Mr Vijay, Himmat & Sunil

Aim

1. To to give exposure to Hawrangs to fight against the nature, its forces and to explore it.

Introduction

2. The deadly commandos of age between 16 to 22 yrs age in the Silla dynasty in Korea are called Hawrangs.
3. So this Institute tries to keep its literal meaning by conditioning their students body and mind through different channels. Simultaneously, while training with the old tradition and style , modern reserches are taken account to make them real Hawrangs. Apart from traditional martial arts conditioning we give them different other individual and group activities, such as trekking, rock climbing, mountaineering, cycling, swimming, long distance running and sand running to improve their leadership qualities, courage, reaction to danger or life threat, discipline, sensible to nature, determination and self confidence.
4. Trekking is walking through difficult terrain's of nature like dense forest, deserts or mountainous ranges or etc. It presents you pleasure as well as thrill.
5. Thrill of 'Thur' desert trekking is life threatening. More than that is 35 Km in one day from morning to evening on foot deep sand and with every 50m a sandune with a trekking team consisting of children of age 8 to 20 yrs and with a load of 5 - 10 Kg each on their rucksack. Thy Hawrangs rather apt.

Nature of Terrain:

6. This trek was a kind of exploration trip to the deserts of 'Thur'. Since we did not chalk out any route but preferred directional trekking. We took the route North-East to Nal. The terrain offered us magnificent view of Thur as well as great resistance. The resistances are foot deep sand with one dead sandune with an inclination of 15 - 60 deg at every 50m we travel. Fear of desert crates, scorpion (breeding season) and sand storms.

Finance:

7. No fee was charged from the members of trek. The participants were asked to bring trek kit and break fast for the day. Institute provided them lunch (Puri, Sabji, Egg Bhujji) on camping site at Dargah. Additionally hot coffee & soup was also served on the way.

Trek Kit

8.

i)	Tracksuit	--	01 Pr
ii)	Shorts	--	01
iii)	T-Shrits	--	02
iv)	Trekking Shoe	--	01
v)	Sandal	--	01
vi)	Under garment	--	02 Pr
vii)	Sun glass	--	01
viii)	Hat	--	01
ix)	Scarf	--	01
x)	Ruck Sack	--	01
xi)	Towel	--	01
x)	Knee cap	--	01 pr
xi)	Water Bottle	--	01
xii)	Vaseline	--	01
xiii)	Band Aid	--	1 pac
xiv)	Sunscreen Lotion	--	01

xv)	Vitamin B-complex Cap--	10
xvi)	Glucose /Electrol --	1 pac
xvii)	Cadboridge Tofy --	10

Team Composition

9.

A. Maharana Pratap

Team Leader : Sunil Kumar

Members :

Vishal

Deben

Pravin

Niranjan

C. Prithviraj Chauhan

Team Leader : Vijay Kumar

Members :

Subham

Paramjeet

Saislmita

B. Chhatrapati Shivaji

Team Leader : Hemmat Singh

Members :

Suraj

Deepak

Yasdeep Saihdeva

Anil Singh

D. Harsh Vardhan

Team Leader : Debendra Kumar

Members :

Sarthak

Rohit

Suresh

It was a bright and cool morning when we started our trek at 7'O clock morning from PLAZA. We were all 22 members from Hawrang institutes of Taekwondo, all full of life and enthusiasm. It was of half an hour leisurely walk down to the railway crossing, our starting point before entering it's the desert. Our Leader Lenka Sir briefed the members about the nature of the terrain, our aim of trekking, wild life, precautions to be taken while on the desert and the weather pattern then he divided us into 4groups and we entered into the wilderness and started our trek.

The sky was cloudy, a perfect weather for desert trek. We moved on a single line, like as ants returning with food grains in their month to their home in a perfect line. The train was beautiful, filled with small bushes on the sands. We moved up and down through the humps. At one time we climbed a big hump and Lo! Behold! What a beautiful valley. Somebody exclaimed, : **“Wa! It's like Switzerland”**

“Have you ever been to” “No I have seen it in picture”

So the landscape was smooth on the valley, only missing was the perfect lawn. Khejrdis free in groups as if perfectly trimmed. We also witnessed some animal shaped trees, then there were “Gandhi ka tin Bandar”, perfectly similar three trees side by side. There were devise kerb bushes also as if some impregnable fort. There were also wild berry bushes. And here we spotted first a herd of Chinkaras. They sprinted past as knowing our presence within no time. Then onwards it has become a regular event to spot them we moved on. We found sheets and pugmarks of different animals. For first time I knew that blu ball & camels... are rounded unlike the cow and buffalos. We walked over numerous rat-pits, may be in some any snake. So we moved carefully probing our lack step. We came across one or two jackal dens or may be of rabbits, then there was shelters of one or cow. Suddenly it came to mind as if we are missing some thing and yes it was the BARTAN. So I suggested Lenka sir to change our course towards some habitant area. And we found in distance a Majhar and nearby it a small farm-low. Suresh and party then solved the problem. There was a massive sand-dune of some 40 feet high. All enjoyed climbing it again & again and rolling down & , the gradient was some 70 deg or so, people washed their faces taking water from Majhar's store water. Then we went down & found one nice platform built for water storage below perhaps. We took one breakfast. And then we had relay race competition and some nice entertainment

<i>Relay Race Result :</i>	<i>Timing at top (Halfway)</i>	<i>Finishing Time</i>
1 st Harshvardhan	42"	1'15"
2 nd Prithviraj Chauhan	43"	1'16"
3 rd Maharana Pratap	44"	1'17"
4 th Chhatrapati Shivaji	45"	1'30"

ENTERTAINMENT & LEADERSHIP

TEAMS : Song +Dance Joke +Leader's + Performance + Song by others

1 st	Prithviraj Chauhan	-	8 1/2 + 3 + 7 + 1/2	=	20
2 nd	Maharana Pratap	-	8 + 2 + 7 1/2	=	17 1/2
3 rd	Harshvardhan	-	8 + 4 + 5 1/2	=	17 1/2
4 th	Chatrapati Shivaji	-	7 + 5 1/2	=	12 1/2

Participants in song- Sarthak, Saismita, Suresh, sunil, Viljay

Participants in Dance – Saismita, Sarthak, Deber, Praveen, Subham, Suresh

WILD LIFE

Trees and Plants : Khejndi, Wild berry, Kikar, Ker bushes, shrubs

Wild Animals & Birds, Reptiles : Chin Kara, Babul, rabbit, Jackal, Sanda (dinosaur small)

Sparrows, Doves, Titter, Eagle, Vultures, Crows

Collections by Members: Flower tree, Stems, Stones, Conch/Snail cells, fur, Shit, peculiar grasses & Roots

We took our lunch (Puri-Sabji), drank hot soup and started our return journey. On the way we witnessed some peculiar lines drawn towards every pits. On the morning the Khejdi tree had saved rain and now from the scorching heat of the afternoon sun. We reached the Air Force Station at 1530 Hrs. Our Leader debriefed us and we dispersed with a heavy but continent heart with delight.

Chapter IX

Mount Nanda Ghunti Expedition (2002)

A Journey to the Sentinel of Garhwal (19,500 ft)

"Every Himalayan peak has its own character; Nanda Ghunti teaches humility, endurance, and unwavering determination."

The year 2002 marked another significant milestone in my Himalayan expeditions with the ascent towards Mount Nanda Ghunti, one of the most magnificent peaks in the Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand. Rising to an altitude of approximately 19,500 feet (5,944 metres), Nanda Ghunti stands majestically on the outer sanctuary of the Nanda Devi region, overlooking vast glaciers, alpine meadows, and rugged mountain valleys. Revered for its natural beauty and challenging terrain, the mountain has long attracted mountaineers seeking both adventure and personal growth.

The expedition to Mount Nanda Ghunti demanded a combination of physical endurance, technical mountaineering skills, and mental resilience. The approach traversed dense oak and rhododendron forests, picturesque alpine bugyals, rocky moraines, glaciers, and snow-covered slopes before reaching the higher camps. With increasing altitude came thinner air, freezing temperatures, unpredictable weather, and powerful mountain winds, making every step a test of patience, discipline, and determination.

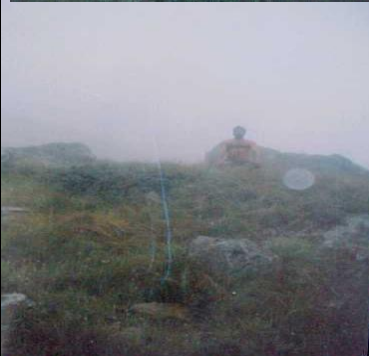
For me, the Nanda Ghunti expedition represented far more than another mountain climb. It became an opportunity to strengthen the qualities that every martial artist strives to cultivate—balance, perseverance, courage, humility, and complete harmony between body, mind, and nature. Every ascent reinforced the timeless lesson that mountains are never conquered; they simply allow those who approach them with preparation, respect, and unwavering spirit to experience their grandeur.

The experiences gained on Mount Nanda Ghunti further enriched my understanding of Mountain Martial Arts, where mountaineering, martial discipline, meditation, and environmental awareness unite to shape not only a stronger adventurer but also a wiser and more compassionate human being.

2002 | Mount Nanda Ghunti (19,500 ft)

- **Range:** Garhwal Himalayas.
- **Flagged Off By:** Shri Shivraj Patil (Lok Sabha Speaker & Former Home Minister).
- **Climate:** Severe cold and treacherous "Scree" (loose rock) slopes.
- **Internal Practice:** Integrated Tummo with martial "Kihap" to channel explosive power for the final summit push.







EXPEDITION TO MOUNT NANDA GHUNTI

MOUNT NANDA GHUNTI

SILA SAMUDRA
GLACIER & ROOF

**RONTI
SADDLE**

HOMKUND
15,500 FT

BASO CAMP

6 KM

BHUJANI 11,300

8 KM

LAT KHUPDI 10,000

14 KM

TATADA

SHUTOL (7,800 FT)

12 KM

PALTINDHAR

SHITEL (6,000 FT)

GULA

BADUK

SALBAGA

CHEFNA

15 KM

RIVER

NANDA KINI

VASUNDHARA FALL

**KARNA
PRAYAG**

ALKANANDA

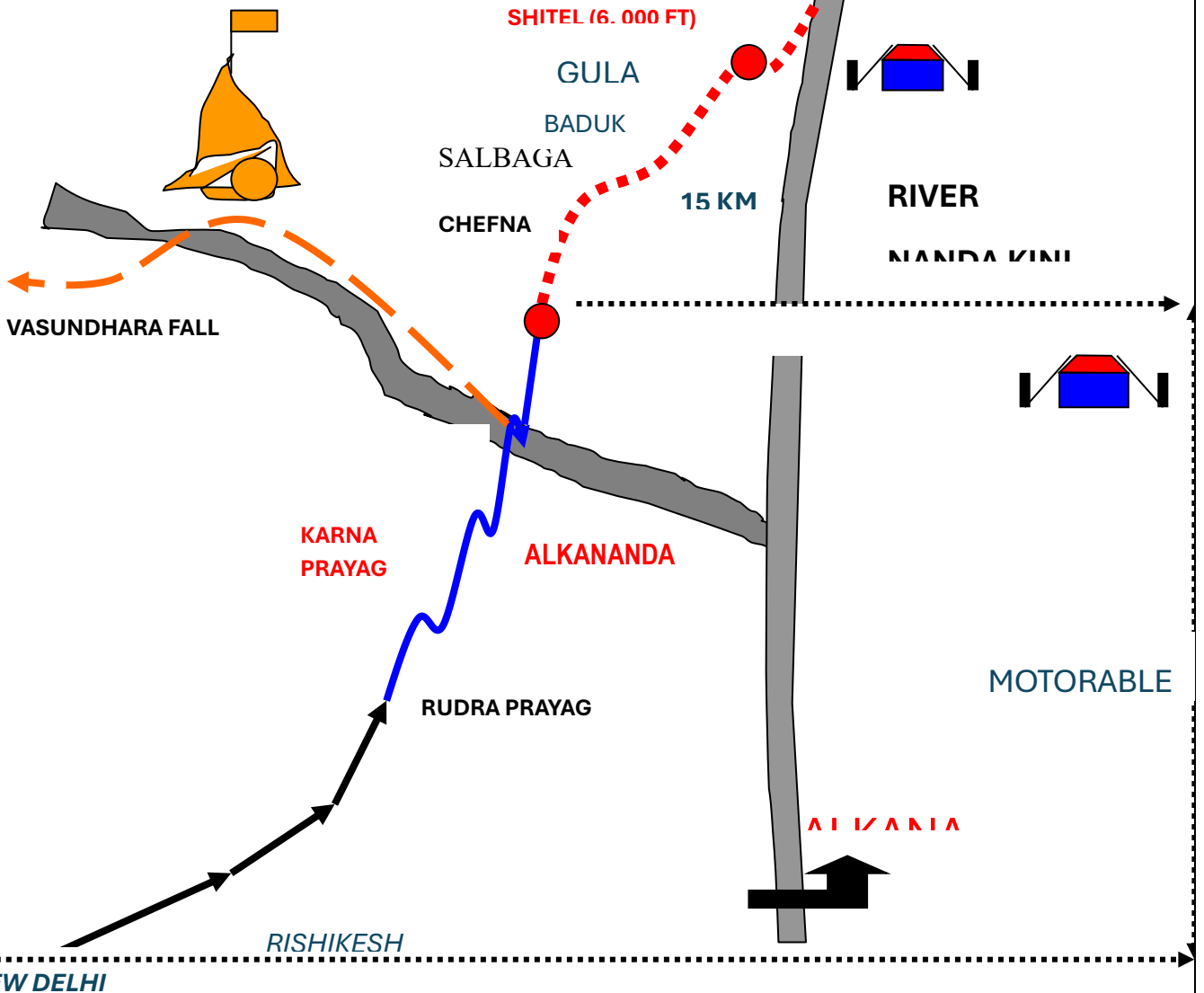
RUDRA PRAYAG

MOTORABLE

ALIZANIA

RISHIKESH

NEW DELHI



Expedition Report

Mount Nanda Ghunti & Ronti Saddle Expedition (2002)

"The Himalayas never reveal all their secrets at once. Every expedition is a lesson in patience, humility, and perseverance."

Objective

The **Mount Nanda Ghunti and Ronti Saddle Expedition** undertaken during **August–September 2002** was another significant milestone in my continuing journey of exploring the relationship between mountaineering, martial arts, and human endurance. Situated in the majestic **Garhwal Himalayas of Uttarakhand**, Mount Nanda Ghunti and the historic **Ronti Saddle** are renowned for their challenging terrain, spectacular alpine landscapes, and historical significance in Indian mountaineering.

The expedition was organised not merely as a mountaineering venture but as an opportunity to experience life in one of the most remote regions of the Himalayas while applying the principles of discipline, teamwork, physical endurance, and mental resilience developed through martial arts and military training.

Pre-Expedition Preparation

Preparation for the expedition began several weeks before departure with regular physical conditioning, endurance training, trekking practice, and equipment checks. Years of service in the **Indian Air Force**, combined with continuous Taekwondo practice and previous Himalayan expeditions, had prepared me physically for the demands of high-altitude mountaineering. However, every Himalayan expedition presents unique challenges, requiring thorough planning and complete respect for the mountains.

On **24 August 2002**, I, along with **Shri J.P. Jena**, departed from **Bikaner** for **New Delhi**. Accompanying me were my wife **Sudha** and my young son **Kalinga**, who came to see me off before another challenging Himalayan journey.

Meeting the Master

On **25 August**, after arriving at **Palam Railway Station**, we proceeded to **Subroto Park**, where we stayed at the residence of my friend Kabu. After freshening up, we travelled to the **Race Course**, where we had the privilege of meeting our revered **Master** before the official flag-off.

Meeting him once again was both inspiring and motivating. His cheerful personality, youthful energy, and affectionate interaction with my son reflected the simplicity and warmth that made him a respected leader. During the gathering, I also met many old friends and fellow expedition members who had assembled from different parts of the country. The Master briefed the entire team regarding the expedition objectives, discipline, safety procedures, and the programme ahead. His words strengthened our confidence and prepared us mentally for the demanding days ahead.

The evening was spent completing the remaining shopping for expedition essentials before returning to Subroto Park for rest.

Journey to the Himalayas

Following the official **Flag-Off on 26 August 2002**, our team departed from New Delhi on **27 August**, travelling towards Uttarakhand.

On **28 August**, we reached **Rishikesh**, the gateway to the Garhwal Himalayas, and continued by road to **Ghat**, arriving in the evening. The overnight halt allowed us to recover from the long journey and prepare for the trek into the mountains.

The following day, **29 August**, we travelled by jeep to **Shitel**, our final road-head before entering the remote mountain region. From here onward, every step had to be earned on foot.

The Trek to Base Camp

The expedition gradually ascended through isolated Himalayan villages, dense forests, alpine meadows, and rugged mountain trails.

Our trekking programme was carefully planned to ensure gradual acclimatisation to increasing altitude.

- **30 August:** Trek from **Shitel to Shutol**.
- **31 August:** Rest day for senior members and those requiring additional acclimatisation.
- **1 September:** Trek from **Shutol to Daund** via the picturesque **Tatad Village**.
- **2 September:** Trek from **Daund to Latakhopdi** through **Bhensada Bhud**, crossing steep mountain trails and beautiful alpine landscapes.
- **3 September:** Acclimatisation and rest.
- **4 September:** Trek from **Latakhopdi to Bhujani**.
- **5 September:** Trek from **Bhujani to Base Camp** via the scenic **Chandni Ghat**.
- **6 September:** Complete rest at Base Camp for acclimatisation and preparation.

Every day's march tested our endurance while rewarding us with breathtaking views of snow-covered peaks, dense forests, crystal-clear streams, and vast Himalayan valleys. The gradual ascent also reminded us that patience is one of the greatest virtues in mountaineering.

Life at Base Camp

Base Camp became our temporary home amidst the grandeur of the Himalayas. Equipment was reorganised, climbing strategies were discussed, weather conditions were monitored, and the team focused on acclimatisation.

On **8 September**, experienced team members **Mishra, Kumar, and Muni** carried out a reconnaissance towards the higher route to assess terrain conditions and finalise the safest approach.

The day also provided an opportunity for me to observe the surrounding glaciers and mountain formations while mentally preparing for the climb ahead.

Climb to Homkund and Ronti Saddle

On **9 September 2002**, we undertook the climb towards the sacred **Homkund** and **Ronti Saddle**. The route traversed rugged glacial moraine, snow-covered slopes, rocky ridges, and high-altitude terrain where every step demanded complete concentration. The reduced oxygen levels made breathing more difficult, requiring slow, rhythmic movement and disciplined energy management. Standing amidst the magnificent Himalayan panorama, I once again experienced the profound silence that only high mountains can offer. Away from civilisation, every breath became an exercise in awareness, every step a meditation, and every challenge another lesson in humility.

Although weather and mountain conditions ultimately determined the extent of our progress, the experience itself became the true achievement. In mountaineering, success is measured not only by reaching a summit but by returning safely with greater wisdom and respect for nature.

The Return Journey

Following the high-altitude phase of the expedition, the team began its gradual descent.

- **10 September:** Returned to Base Camp.
- **11 September:** Descended to **Latakhopdi**.
- **12 September:** Continued retreat to **Daund**.

The descent allowed both body and mind to recover while offering time to reflect upon the experiences gained during the expedition.

Martial Arts in the Himalayas

One unique feature of this expedition was the continuation of martial arts practice even in the remote Himalayan environment. From **13 to 15 September**, I conducted and participated in **Kenbudo** practice sessions at **Daund**. Training amidst the serene Himalayan surroundings reinforced my growing conviction that martial arts need not remain confined within indoor training halls. The mountains themselves became a natural dojo where balance, breathing, concentration, discipline, and harmony with nature could be experienced in their purest form.

The photo session conducted during this period captured not merely memories but the spirit of adventure, friendship, and lifelong learning that defined the expedition.

Return to Civilization

On **16 September**, we commenced our final trek back to **Shitel**, passing once again through **Shutol** and **Tatad Village**. The following day, after another practice session, we completed the final trek to **Ghat**. On **18 September**, we travelled by bus to **Rishikesh** before boarding the overnight journey to **New Delhi**. We reached Delhi on **19 September**, where the expedition concluded with a **Certificate Distribution Ceremony**, celebrating the successful completion of another memorable Himalayan expedition.

Finally, on **20 September 2002**, I departed for **Odisha** by **Neelanchal Express**, carrying with me not only memories of the mountains but also invaluable lessons that would continue to shape my philosophy of martial arts, adventure, leadership, and life.

Lessons Learned

The **Mount Nanda Ghunti and Ronti Saddle Expedition** reaffirmed my belief that mountaineering is one of the finest schools of character development. The Himalayas taught patience, humility, discipline, teamwork, adaptability, and unwavering determination. Every trail strengthened physical endurance, every camp cultivated camaraderie, and every mountain reinforced the timeless martial principle that the greatest victory is not over nature, but over one's own limitations.

Chapter X

River Bed Treks – Kutch, Gujarat (2003–2008)

Training Where the Rivers Once Flowed

"A warrior does not choose the terrain; he learns to master himself in every terrain."

Between **2003 and 2008**, while serving in the **Indian Air Force at Bhuj, Kutch**, I was presented with a unique opportunity to explore one of India's most unusual natural training grounds—the vast **dry river beds** of the Kutch region in Gujarat. Unlike the snow-covered Himalayas, dense jungles of the Western Ghats, or the scorching sands of the Thar Desert, these ancient river channels offered an entirely different environment for adventure, endurance, and martial arts training.

The river beds of Kutch are characterised by **harsh climatic conditions**, rocky landscapes, loose boulders, gravel, dry stream channels, and uneven surfaces carved by seasonal monsoon floods. During most of the year, the rivers remain dry, exposing kilometres of rugged terrain interspersed with large stones, exposed rock formations, pebbles, and sand. Summer temperatures often soar above **45°C**, while dry winds and low humidity create a physically demanding environment that constantly tests endurance and hydration.

Initially, these river beds became venues for exploration and adventure trekking. However, as I spent more time training in this unique terrain, I recognised their immense value as a natural martial arts laboratory. Unlike the smooth floors of a dojo, every step on the rocky river bed demanded conscious foot placement, stability, and balance. No two surfaces were identical. Every stride required continuous adjustment, developing coordination and strengthening the body's natural ability to adapt to unpredictable ground conditions.

I began incorporating **Taekwondo footwork drills** into my trekking sessions, practising movement across loose stones, uneven rocks, gravel, and inclined surfaces. The constantly changing terrain significantly improved my **balance, agility, coordination, proprioception (body awareness), and lower-limb stability**. Every movement demanded complete concentration, as even a minor lapse in attention could result in slipping or losing balance. These natural challenges refined my footwork far more effectively than repetitive training on a flat indoor surface.

The rocky terrain also strengthened the stabilising muscles of the ankles, knees, hips, and core, improving overall body control and reducing unnecessary movement. I discovered that martial artists who train only on predictable surfaces often become dependent upon ideal conditions. Nature, however, never offers perfect footing. By adapting to irregular terrain, I learned to move with greater confidence, efficiency, and awareness under all circumstances. The harsh environment also became an excellent classroom for developing mental resilience. Walking for long hours under the intense Gujarat sun required careful management of energy, hydration, breathing, and concentration. The silence of the dry river valleys encouraged introspection, while the rugged landscape reinforced the importance of patience and persistence. Every trek became a practical lesson in endurance, self-discipline, and environmental awareness.

These expeditions further strengthened my belief that martial arts should never be confined to enclosed training halls. Every natural environment offers unique opportunities for learning. The mountains develop endurance, forests sharpen awareness, deserts cultivate resilience, and rocky river beds refine balance and precision. Together, they create a complete system of physical and mental development that cannot be replicated within conventional training facilities. During my years in Kutch, I also encouraged fellow Air Warriors, adventure enthusiasts, and my martial arts students to experience training in natural terrain. Many discovered that practising movement in challenging outdoor environments improved not only their physical abilities but also their confidence, adaptability, and appreciation for nature. These experiences later became an integral part of my own teaching philosophy, where outdoor training, adventure education, and martial arts complement one another to develop complete individuals.

Looking back, the **River Bed Treks of Kutch** were far more than routine adventure outings. They represented another important chapter in my continuing journey of integrating **martial arts, military discipline, adventure sports, and**

nature-based training. The rocky river beds silently taught lessons of balance, awareness, adaptability, and perseverance—qualities that every martial artist must cultivate throughout life. They reaffirmed my conviction that the greatest dojo is not built of concrete and walls but is found wherever nature presents a new challenge and an opportunity to grow.

2003–2008 | River Bed Treks (Kutch, Gujarat)

- **Climate:** Harsh, arid, and rocky terrain.
- **Practice:** Refinement of Taekwondo footwork on uneven, rocky surfaces to enhance proprioception and balance.



Chapter XI

2004–2008 | IAF Elite Missions & Siachen Mastery

Mount CB16 Expedition (2004)

A Journey into the Remote High Himalayas

"Some mountains are famous because of history; others remain unnamed to the world, yet they offer the greatest lessons to those who dare to climb them."

The Mount CB16 Expedition of 2004 was one of the most challenging and rewarding high-altitude mountaineering experiences of my Himalayan journey. Situated in the remote Central Himalayas, Mount CB16 is among the lesser-known expedition peaks that demand exceptional physical endurance, technical competence, and unwavering mental resilience. Unlike popular trekking peaks visited by thousands each year, CB16 lies in a rugged and isolated mountain environment where nature remains untouched and every step requires complete self-reliance.

Reaching the mountain involved a long approach march through remote Himalayan valleys, crossing glacial rivers, alpine meadows, rocky moraines, and vast snowfields before establishing successive high camps. The route gradually ascended into an environment dominated by glaciers, towering ridgelines, ice-covered slopes, and exposed mountain faces. As altitude increased, oxygen levels decreased significantly, making even ordinary activities physically demanding and requiring careful acclimatisation.

The terrain around Mount CB16 is both beautiful and unforgiving. The climb involves negotiating unstable moraine, steep snow slopes, glacier travel, loose rock, icy ridges, and exposed sections where concentration and sound judgment are essential. Weather conditions can change within minutes, with clear blue skies rapidly giving way to snowfall, dense clouds, strong winds, or whiteout conditions. Temperatures often remain well below freezing, particularly during the night and early morning summit attempts.

The mountain demands proficiency in the use of technical mountaineering equipment, including crampons, ice axes, ropes, harnesses, helmets, snow anchors, and glacier travel techniques. Every member of the expedition must demonstrate teamwork, discipline, and complete trust in fellow climbers, as success depends not on individual strength alone but on collective responsibility and sound decision-making.

For me, the Mount CB16 Expedition represented much more than another ascent. It became another opportunity to integrate the principles of martial arts, Indian Air Force training, and high-altitude mountaineering into a unified philosophy of personal development. The discipline learned in Taekwondo, the leadership and teamwork cultivated in military service, and the patience developed through Himalayan expeditions worked together in perfect harmony. Every careful step on the glacier, every controlled breath in the thin mountain air, and every obstacle encountered reinforced the timeless martial values of courage, balance, perseverance, humility, and self-control.

Standing amidst the vast silence of the Himalayas, I once again realised that the mountain does not recognise rank, profession, or achievement. It responds only to preparation, respect, discipline, and humility. Mount CB16 became another great teacher, reminding me that true victory is not measured by reaching a summit alone, but by returning with greater wisdom, deeper self-awareness, and renewed respect for nature.

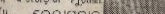
The lessons learned during the Mount CB16 Expedition further strengthened my conviction that mountains are the finest academies for developing leadership, resilience, endurance, and character. Every expedition deepened my understanding that the greatest journey is not merely towards a Himalayan summit, but towards mastering one's own body, mind, and spirit.

2004 -Mount CB16 Expedition

- Range: Dhauladhar Range.
- Climate: High-altitude glaciated conditions.
- Practice: High-altitude sparring; testing the limits of anaerobic martial performance.



[illegible]


 ଶ୍ରୀରାମ, ବଳରାମ ମୁକା
 ଆବାସୀ, କେଶବପାଳୀ

BHUBANESWAR, FRIDAY
 OCTOBER 25, 2002

THE SHUMANYA

ଶ୍ରୀବତ୍ସରାଜ ଶ୍ରୀମନ୍ଦିର
 ୨୫ ଡିସେମ୍ବର, ୨୦୦୨

ସପ୍ତମ ବର୍ଷ ■ ୨୨ଶ ସଂଖ୍ୟା ■ Vol. - VII ■ NO.22

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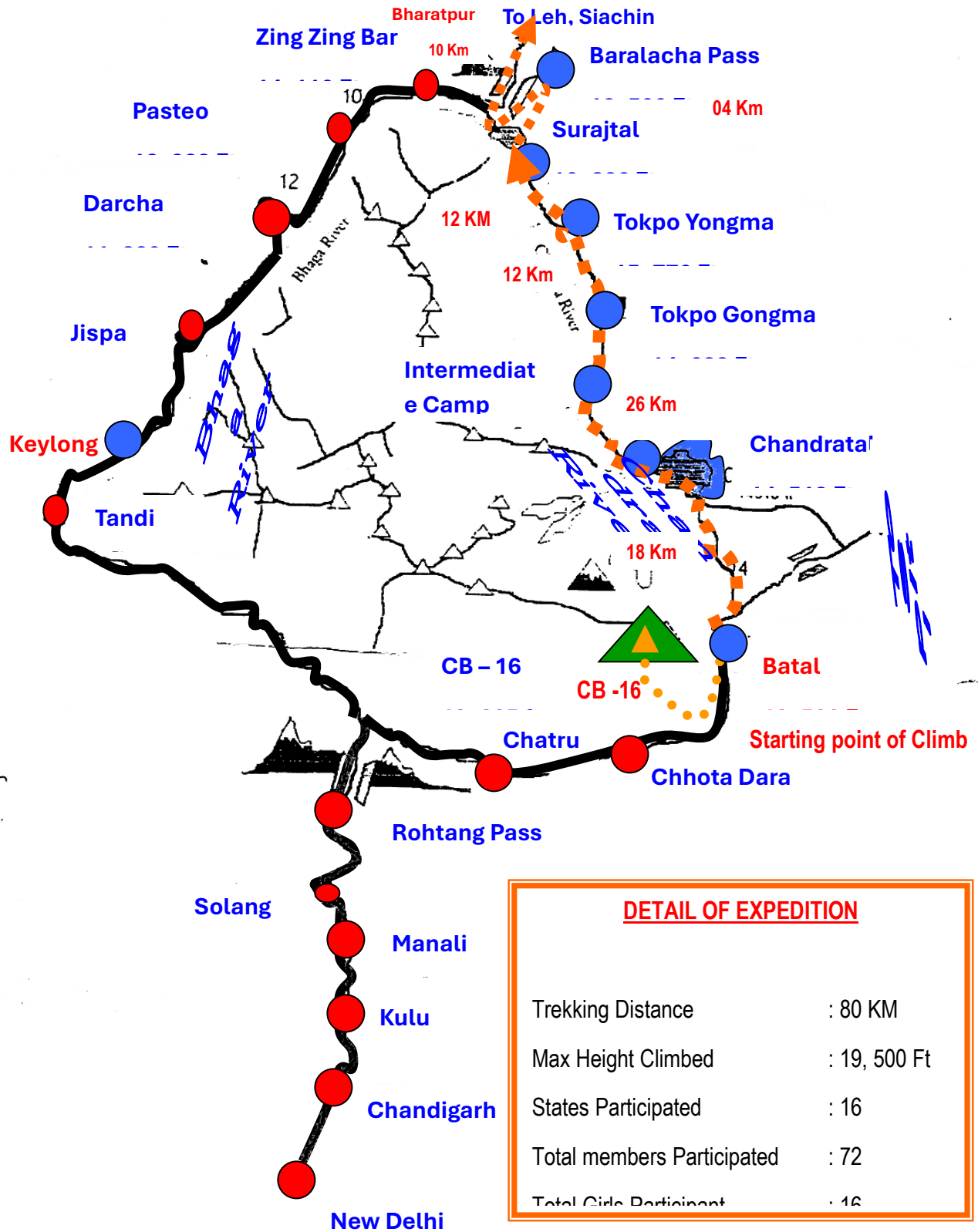
ନବପ୍ର, ୨୪/୧୦ (ସଂପ୍ର.) । ନାର୍ମଳ ଆର୍ଟି ମ୍ୟାଗାଜିନ ଯୋଗେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠା କରାଯାଇଥିବା ଏକାଧିକ ଦିନ ଧରି ଭାରତୀୟ ଦୃଃସାହସିକ କ୍ରୀଡା ସଙ୍ଗଠନର ଶ୍ରୀମନ୍ତ୍ରୀ ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁମିତ୍ରା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଅଧିନୀୟତାରେ ଏକାଧିକ ଦିନ ଧରି ହିମାଳୟରେ ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଶିବିର ଚାଲିଛି । ଏହି ଶିବିରରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ଦୃଃସାହସିକ କ୍ରୀଡା ସଙ୍ଗଠନର ସଭାପତି ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁମିତ୍ରା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଅଧିନୀୟତାରେ ଏକାଧିକ ଦିନ ଧରି ହିମାଳୟରେ ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଶିବିର ଚାଲିଛି । ଏହି ଶିବିରରେ ଭାରତୀୟ ଦୃଃସାହସିକ କ୍ରୀଡା ସଙ୍ଗଠନର ସଭାପତି ଶ୍ରୀମତୀ ସୁମିତ୍ରା ଦେବୀଙ୍କ ଅଧିନୀୟତାରେ ଏକାଧିକ ଦିନ ଧରି ହିମାଳୟରେ ପ୍ରଶିକ୍ଷଣ ଶିବିର ଚାଲିଛି ।

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୧୫୫୫, Sector-A, Zone-D, Malleswara Industrial Estate, Po., Resubee, Bhubaneswar - 751 006, Orissa

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HIGH ALTITUDE CB 16 MOUNTAINEERING



CB-16/ CHANDRATAL HIGH ALTITUDE MOUNTAINEERING EXPEDITION – 2004

Location

The expedition to **CB-16/ Chandratat** was organised by **Adventure Sports Association of India, Bangalore** from **06 Sep 04 to 24 Sep 04**. CB-16 and Chandratat situated on the **Zaskar range** of Himalayas in the district of Lahaul of Himachal Pradesh. Located at **Longitude 77° 31', latitude 32 ° 19'** and at an altitude of **19, 805 feet**. CB derived from Chandra and Bhaga River. Both rivers taking birth from Pirpanjal ranges of Himalayas. The Chandratat spell bounds the trekker at his first sight with translucent and ripple less water reflecting deep blue sky and dark brown mountains.



Flag off

The expedition was flagged off by **Chief Minister of Karnataka Mr. Dharam Singh** on 28 Aug 04 at Bangalore. Team departed from New Delhi on 06 Sep 04.

Expedition Administration

The expedition was lead by **Acharya Babu T Raghu**. Administrative in charge **Mr. Sunil Kumar**, Camp Officer in charge Feeding and Filming **Mr. Ashok Kumar Lenka**, Technical training in charges **Mr. PR Reji** and **Mr VN Mishra**, Security in charge **Mr I Muni** and Ladies liason officer **Miss GS Priyanka**. All above are expert in Martial arts (Kenbudo) in different capacities.

Teams

A total of **72 Young and energetic climber** of which **15 were girls and 01 woman** from **16 States** of India joined the expedition. The states represented were New Delhi, Haryana, UP, Uttranchal, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, AP, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Jharkand, Tamilnadu, Chattisgarh, Assam and Himachal Pradesh. Teams were named after prominent rivers of India the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Brahma Putra, Tunga Bhadra, Sutlej, Beas, Netravathi, Saraswati and Krishna. **Out of 72 members, 40 were students of Martial arts (Kenbudo) and out of 40, 15 were of Black Belts.**



Aim & Objective of Expedition

Expedition had different objective to be achieved. Those were as follows: -

**“To develop
brining about a change
more positive direction.
and**



**discipline. To inculcate a sense of adventurism, their by
in character. Channelise the energies of youth and put it into
Bring youth close to national leaders in different walk of life
teach them leadership qualities. To
develop athletic skills at high altitude.**



**To study on high altitude physiological changes caused by
prevailing environment. To Study in esoteric, yogic and
yogachara elements like Ritods, Tamaskangs, Tsumo, Longum**

**Pranayama etc and allow the body to undergo some austerities. Exposure to geography, flora and fauna
and socio-economical conditions of people living in extreme difficult terrains. Keeping Himalayas clean.
Exposure the youth to great heritage and religious importance of Himalayas. Bringing different states,
language, cultural peoples together and cultivate brotherhood among them. Teach them management and
survival skills in crisis time.**

Major Achievement's

Major achievements of expedition were successful climbing of **Peak CB-16 (19, 805 ft)**. Trekking a distance of **80 Km on a mountainous route at an altitude of 13500 feet to 16500feet**. Practicing **esoteric element of martial arts at various heights of Himalayas** including Yoga, Yogachara & meditation. **Bringing all 72 members back to plains unhurt**. Rescuing the life of Miss Santosh from Acute Mountain Sickness and Miss Lalitha and Miss Devika from Hypothermia while crossing the river Tokpo Gongma. Apart from achieving the above all other objectives of expedition were successfully achieved.

Brief Narrative

New Delhi - Batal

Expedition members boarded the bus at **ISBT New Delhi on 06 Sep 04**. Bus headed to our destination **Batal (Turbulant Wind Area)** vide Chandigarh, Mandi, Kulu, Manali, Solangnala, Rohtang Pass (**World highest Pass**), Grampho, Chooti, Chhatru and Chhota dara on the bank of Chandra river. **On 07 Sep 04 at 1800 hrs** team arrived at Batal and camped. Here a total of 12 tents plus one kitchen tent was erected.

At Batal & Climbing of CB-16

Batal : Height 13, 500 ft CB-16 : Height 19, 805 ft.

The 'Batal' presented a magnificent look surrounded by CB groups of Mountains; glaciers and high raised snow clouded peaks. Among those prominent peaks were CB 13 & CB 14. Here we camped for 03 days to attempt CB-16 and for acclimatization for trekkers. At Batal, our honorable master leader imparted us extensive training on Kenbudo subjects such as Tsumo and Lungum and athletic skills, the esoteric element of martial arts philosophy of lord Budha's period. While practicing we were grasping for the breath due to low oxygen availability and temperature swinging down to minus due to high pitch wind. **Such practice continued at all camping sites at different heights of Himalayas**. **On 09 Sep 04 the peak was summited** by some of the ASAI climbers.



MR ASHOK K LENKA AT
19, 000 FT.



Batal - Chandratal

Batal : Height 13, 500 ft Chandratal : Height 14, 518 ft.

Trek Distance: 18 Km

After the sweetness of success of sumitting the peak, on 11 Sep 04 we set out to trek to "Chandratal" a magnificent lake. After trekking a distance of approximately 18 Km in this so-called '**Cold Desert**' we reached the famous Chandratal at 1400 hrs.



At Chandratal Height: 14, 518 ft



Chandratal a beautiful lake at 14, 518 ft. Its translucent, bluish ripple less water and its virgin beauty took off all our trekking pain. We were refreshed again. **The lake was unbelievable, virgin, calm, bluish, reflection are flawless and inviting.** We were poetic. The lake surrounded by CB groups of mountain. Among those prominent were Tapu Giri (5790m), Minar (6172 m), Pagoda (5913 m), Tara Pahar (6096 m) & Sammuder Tapu Glacier. The Scenic beauty, the environment, the geography, the landscape was quite supportive for our **study and practice of esoteric element of martial arts i.e. Yoga and Yogachara.** Chandratal is very famous trekking place on this range. We met several trekking parties. Out of which one was lead by **Director of great Himalayan National**



Park Mr. Sanjeeva, who on our request imparted a lecture on **Nature awareness and Himalayan Flora and fauna.** Their photographer & filmmaker **Mr. I Paul** gave good tips on **nature photography and filmmaking.** He makes documentary for Government of Himachal Pradesh. Both talks were very informative. On **11 & 12 Sep 04** on the banks of Chandratal an extensive session on **athletic skills & Lungum** was imparted to all the martial arts

participants.



MR ASHOK K LENKA AT CHANDRATAL (14, 500FT). A MAGNIFICENT RIPPLELESS LAKE IN ZANSKAR RANGE OF HIMALAYAS. WHERE RECENTLY A UNIDENTIFIED FLYING OBJECT WAS FOUND ON 28 SEP 04 WHICH WAS COVERED ON AJTAK NEWS CHANNEL.



At Chandratal Camp No 2

FOSSILE STONE OF 50 MILLION YEARS OLD SINCE THE BIRTH OF HIMALAYAS FROM STETHIS SEA. THE STONE HAS A CLEAR PRINTS OF SEA SHELLS AND FISH BONES .

Trek Distance : 03 Km

After 02 days of camping and **practice of martial arts, yoga and meditation** we moved to other bank of Chandratal on **13 Sep 04.** To reach the new camping location we were to trek 03 Km. On the new location we were lucky to find **pugmark of snow leopard (a rarely find breed)** and **50 million year old sea fossils.** It was a remarkable achievement.



Load Ferry

On **14 Sep 04**, morning we all underwent a Sailum practice for two hours. Today **load ferry of rations, mountaineering equipment and advance party (route reccee)** was planned to set up an intermediate camp between Tokpo Gongma & Tokpo Yongma. Advance reccee party consisting of **Mrs. Muni, Mr. VN Mishra, Mr. Sreedhar, Mr. Rajiv, Mr. NB Singh, Mr. Sanjeev Lamba and was lead Mr I Muni.** Terrain ahead was a difficult one says Mr. Kumar another good climber on return from load ferry.

Chandratal – Intermediate Camp No-1 (14, 600 ft)

Trek Distance: 10 Km.

After a day of camping on **15 Sep 04** we decided to move further by **10 Km** to set up an **intermediate camp.** On the trek we were to cross almost 18 big humps of descend and ascend of about 40-50 meter each. After trekking 02-05 hrs, we could find advance party tent pitched on a rocky mountain ridge. Although we were not in a mood to set up an intermediate camp between Chandratal and Tokpo Gongma, which is of 26 Km, but looking at the conditions of trekkers, especially the girls, i.e. Santosh, Das, Naveen and Devika. And the geography landscape, hardship and deteriorating weather pattern, Leader decided to set up a intermediate camp on same rocky mountain ridge. Leader decided to camp here due to bad weather. Tired climbers set tents and got inside it. Kitchen was on action under Ashok Kumar Lenka. Weather was deteriorating. A little snowfall scared us.

Intermediate Camp No 1 – Tokpo Gongma (14 688 ft)

Trek Distance : 14 KM

On 16 Sep 04, morning weather opened up after bad early hours. We decided to trek further to reach Tokpo Gongma. Since the weather was going worse, members getting sick due to trek over load and practices. Tents unpitched, rations and hardware distributed, breakfast taken by members, cleaned surrounding garbage burnt and dumped. A last trek begins with, Acharya whistle; climbers lined up with their colour full haversacks and cheerful and eager eyes to see more of Himalayas, beautiful part of untouched India. Here the trek to Tokpo Gongma was really nerve thrilling 14 Kms. ***The trek was on a very narrow goat path on the ridge adjacent to Chandra River on 75-degree gradient. A small slip of your feet may take you to the Rocky River, which has a 100 ft of sharp descent from the route. The goat path several places have washed off due to landslides. The path was as narrow as one feet width. A little slip of feet or mind will take you down 100 meter below into the ice-cold streams of Chandra river and you might even have a slip of life. So it invited a 100% concentration and courage and non-vertigo to trek this route.*** On the same route I was behind Vatsala, Vatsala's feet slipped my nerves quenched, I caught her and she controlled said Mr Lenka. By 1700 hrs everybody were at a new location closer to river Tokpo Gongma. Camping was peaceful and evening prayer was even more graceful with Budham Saranam Gachhami



At Tokpo Gongma (14, 688 ft)

River Crossing

17. On the very next day on 17 Sep 04 early mornings then river Tokpo Gongma current was **very high and on the water as cold as sub zero temperature**. Since with the day rise and temperature increase current of river increases due to melting of ice, so we have to cross the river at the early hour only. After an hour of struggle, Leader and the technical team could set up a river-crossing route with a rope across. Members were asked to cross with the help of rope. On the process of crossing many fallen down inside river due to its high current and sub zero temperature. **As a result two girls named hypothermia. There conditions were so heart chance of survival. Once again the ASAI operations. The rescue members rushed in was lit; they were wrapped in no. of sleeping their pulse rate. Hot fluids were prepared and warm with good massaging. They were being kept engaged in talks. But both of them were really struggling for life. They were freezing, shivering and screaming with pain. In the meanwhile clouds disappeared and Sun God came as a blessing for their life. Camp officer Ashok discovered a patch of sand being very hot. He asked them to walk on it for some time. After an hour-long operation their body underwent self-thermo regulation and as a result both came out of Hypothermia. After another hour of rest all members were again ready to trek to Tokpo Yongma another deadly river enroute to cross.**



Lalitha and Devika suffered from thrilling that they had 50% members called for emergency with all emergency aid. The fire bags. Doctor was monitoring served. Palm and feet were kept

Tokpo Gongma - Tokpo Yongma (15, 776 ft) Trek Distance : 12 KM

After breakfast on **17 Sep 04** we set out for 'Tokpo Yongma' at 1000 hrs. The distance from 'Tokpo Gongma' to 'Tokpo Yongma' is approximate 12 Kms. The range though did not have much ups and down but the entire trek was on moraines. Though the route did not risk us but it was tiresome and boring to trek continuously on rocky path. But the inspiring was the geography and the landscape, which was ever changing. **The terrain enchanted us with its ever-changing beauty and landscape almost every Kilometer we trekked.** It entertained us. At around 1400 hrs we reached Tokpo Yongma. **The place had a unique landscape of earthen hills surrounding the camping site. River Tokpo Yongma from mountaintop ran down the plane to meet the "Chandra River" resulting in melodious sound and great scenic beauty. The sky was bluish and CB7(6187 m) ice clad peak stood majestic in the backdrop to the north west of camping site.** The beauty of this valley was enhanced with the 12 eco-friendly colorful tents being erected at the bed of Chandra and Tokpo Yongma river. In this trek the worst affected were Bangalorean girls. Kitchen was lifeline it worked well with proper guidance of Mr. Camp officer Ashok K Lenka.



Tokpo Yongma – Intermediate Camp No-2

On **18 Sep 04**, we unpitched out camp to proceed to Surajtal or Baralacha Pass. The trek distance is was 10-12 Km. Today morning river crossing was bit easier than the earlier one, as the rapids were slow. Three girls suffered from hypothermia were piggy backed to cross the river. Here the condition one of the girl named Miss Santosh worsened due to Acute Mountain sickness. Leader decided to set up an intermediate camp after an hour of trek towards Baralacha Pass on Leh highway. As per the leader instructions after an hour of trek the advance party stopped on finding a nice site for camping. This camping site was magnificent due to majestic; whitish snow clouded peaks like KR 2 (6187m) and glaciers with Chandra flowing calmly at the foothills of these peaks.

At Intermediate Camp No-2

In the senior's tent we were relaxing and singing. Shyam was making coffee for us on his survival stove. A sudden call of distress Master... Master ... a girls voice in panicky. We all rushed to girl's tent. Master was already there. All girls had eyes with a question mark. Miss Santosh has fainted out. She was not able to breathe. Master was giving her force breathing and making her to do Pranayama for breath at regular intervals. Mr. Reji was busy in taking the pulse. The scene inside the girl's tent was horrifying. **We rated for her survival this night to 30%.** She was served hot soup and maggi and glucose. After solid two hours of struggle Master could bring her to a modest stage. Others were asked to monitor her through out night. Leader decided to descend her to lower height by stretcher only. **On 19 Sep 04**, morning time again her condition deteriorated. Mr. Reji prepared the stretcher for Miss Santosh. **The stretcher was made out of two sticks, Ice axe, rope and sleeping bags. Master made team of eight people Mr. Reji, Mr. Kumar, Master Karthik, Master Arun, Mr. Vijay, Mr. Sreedhar, Mr. Awasthi with team leader Mr. Ashok K Lenka were ready to take on the rescue mission. This is the most difficult task, one can expect on a mountain range. Apart from our own bag and survival kit of 20-25 Kg we were to carry a stretcher of Miss Santosh of 60 Kg.** Trek distance to Baralacha Pass is of approximate 10 Km from this intermediate camp no-2.



The Rescue Mission from At Intermediate Camp No-2 – Baralacha Pass (16, 500 ft)

Trek distance: 10 Km

The operation started on **19 Sep 04**. **This nine boy's team was tough enough to carry out the most scared operation. What can be more holic work than saving somebody's life from a terrain like this? Mr Lenka and Mr. Reji were constantly monitoring her.** Miss Santosh was responding our call. Her friend Master Karthik a joke box for her was asked to keep talking to her through out to keep her out of sleep. She was also given a Walkman with her favorite Tamil Song's cassette to play. Mr. Reji was intermittently checking her pulse rate. But the stretcher carrying squad was sweating out and putting every possible effort to save her life. They were maintaining a good pace inspite of the fact they were overloaded with own bag of 30 Kg at the back and on hand 60 Kg weight. **Route was as narrow as that case you can imagine four people maintaining an equal level to stretcher, down to Nalla. Terrain provided a determined to not to succumb to the uninterrupted trek we could carry her to**



to accomodate one man at a time. In walking together on a ridge and so as not to allow the diseased to roll challenge and the rescue squad was hardship. After a 2 ½ hrs of Baralacha Pass i.e. on the Chandigarh-Leh highway. Camp officer & Leader of rescue team Ashok K Lenka stopped an Army convoy and introduce himself as a Sgt of IAF to the Subedar Major (Convoy Commander). He apprised him of the situation and asked a lift to Pasteo Transit camp SMC. The convoy commander was very co-operative and caring and immediately responded to our request. They agreed to give a lift. We put Miss Santosh in the vehicle. The attendants next were Mr. Sreedher, Mr. Rajiv and Mr. Arun. Convoy left. We took a breath of relief. The sacred job was perfectly performed. At this terrain, landscape and geography carrying somebody in stretcher for 10 Km is not less than Everest effort. On return from Baralacha Pass, Leader and all members had a great sign of relief.

Baralacha Pass – Surajtal (16, 326 ft)

Leader decided to camp at Surajtal. A 04 Km more trek down from Baralacha Pass. Members trekked down to Surajtal. The Surajtal unlike Chandratat is a decaying lake due to landslide from Leh Highway. May it's few years from now it will bury off. Landscape was not inspiring. We camped for the night. Night weather deteriorated and Surajtal experienced a snowfall. All members had a thrilling experience of snowfall.



MR NARENDRA BAHADUR SINGH (UP) , MR ASHOK KUMAR LENKA(ORISSA) , MASTER BABU T RAGHU (LEADER) AND SANJEEV KUMAR LAMBA(NEW DELHI)

At Surajtal (16, 326 ft)

On 20 Sep 04, morning broke; we unzipped our tent and found the entire range was covered with a blanket of snow. The entire range was white and peaceful. Tents looked like beautiful flowers in this Surajtal. The tents were even covered with snow and the streams have frozen. The entire scenic beauty was so exiting that all climbers with their cameras came out of tents started clicking and clicking and played with snow. An unforgettable memory at Surajtal. Hence the snow was a thrill. We loved to play on late in the day.



MR ASHOK K LENKA AT SURAJTAL (16, 200 FT). A DECAYING LAKE BESIDES CHANDIGARH- LEH HIGHWAY WHICH NEEDS THE ATTENTION OF THE AUTHORITIES

Surajtal – Bharatpur

At 1000 hrs on 20 Sep 04, Leader decided for trek to Bharatpur. Bharatpur located at a distance of 10 Km from Surajtal towards Leh on Chandigarh-Leh highway. After two hrs of trek we reached Bharatpur. Landscape was beautiful with 06 Nepalis Dhaba on the Leh highway. So **master decided to camp here for two days for Martial Arts practice.** The height is 15500 feet. On reaching Bharatpur all climbers rushed in to different Dhabas and filled in their stomach with egg omelets and Paratha and etc. Bill was not a problem. After long time we are again at Dhabas.

A Unique Martial Arts Practice at Bharatpur

ALL SENIOR BLACK BELTS WITH MR ASHOK K LENKA & MR SUNIL KUMAR AT 16,500 FT

Next day morning on 21 Sep 04, the entire camps were on Zen attire and were ready to take on the tough practice that would follow from the Guru. At an altitude of 15500 feet it's a rare happening. The Sailum got activated. All Sadhakas were in white martial dress and Siddhas were in black top and white bottom martial dress. Acharya Babu T Raghu entered the court in full black gear. The Sailum on its full throttle welcomed Acharya in its martial way. Then for an hour a rigorous training schedule seconded by Lungum was imparted to the Sadhakas. The whole range was nerve thrilling on the shout and the martial action of the Sadhakas. The fight sequences were great with deadly shouts. These kinds of practice at high altitude in Himalayas were performed by some of the oldest disciple of Guru Bodi Dharma in the olden days in some of the monasteries in Himalayas. Few to name were Guru Mailarepa and Naljorepa. Those practices use to be called as TSUMO and LUNGUM. While TSUMO is thermo regulation, the LUNGUM is capacity to work out for a long period on high altitude. Biologically I could subject my lungs & heart to a heavy load thereby I could prove my lungs capacity & finally I was aware that this will result in improving my RBC counts & branching out of New Capillaries. It is great when you know the truth & do the things in a right way. The credit goes to the master leader only. No doubt it surprises the inhabitant & the other mountaineers of the region since they are ignorant of the fact. I recollected my master leader few words "Being Martial Artiest defeating human being is no victory to test your strength you should try to defeat the Nature" said Mr Lenka Camp officer i/c Expedition.



MR ASHOK K LENKA WITH EXPEDITION LEADER MASTER BABU T RAGHU 8TH DAN BLACK BELT ON THEIR MARTIAL DRESS AT BHARATPUR.

Flash News Miss Santosh

Today evening while we were in Prayer Mr. Sreedhar arrived and gave us the good news of Miss Santosh recovery from Acute Mountain Sickness. As per him, she received oxygen at Pasteo transit camp and after the recovery she was transferred to Darcha.

Bharatpur – Keylong

On 22 Sep 04 morning, I was given the task to book the truck for the members to Keylong as the bus service was not available from Bharatpur said Mr Lenka camp officer. The truck was booked, the luggage were loaded and members boarded truck. The truck left Bharatpur at 0845 hrs, leaving behind the beautiful memories of the expedition. Every time this is the most heart breaking moment. The memory tortures us as for these many days we had been moving in this manless land like a family sharing every good and bad moments. Another lovely memory to cherish forever. The truck crossing Baralacha Pass, Zingzing Bar, Pasteo, Darcha and then reached Keylong in the evening at 1600 hrs.

At Keylong



After reaching at Keylong the very first job was to book the hotel for the members. This was rightly done Mr. Sreedhar and Mr. Ashok K Lenka. Since no hotel, Dhaba huts were good for the members. Every member got refreshed and called up to their near and dear ones and apprised them of their nice completion and safe return from expedition. This town located on a mountain ridge and guarded by four monasteries on Four Corners of this town. Among the monasteries, the prominent was **Guru Ghantal monasteries established by Guru Padmasambhav, then chancellor Nalanda University in eleventh century.** In the evening Leader took us to **Kordung Gompa, a monastery first established in the 11th century and rebuilt by Lama Norbu.** To reach this monastery we were to descend down 200 feet from Keylong town to cross the river bridge across the **Bhaga river.** After river crossing we were to trek to other side of the ridge and climbed up by approximately 700 feet. We took 45 min of good trek time to this monastery. **Looking at the landscape of routes**

to monastery I can imagine how tough must be the practice of martial arts those days on these monasteries, said Mr Lenka. On reaching the monastery, it was evening, so we did prayer, and photographed and spoke to head priest regarding Vajrayana and TSUMO. Then we were back to hotel for dinner. On **23 Sep 04** morning time after breakfast we visited **Guru Ghantal monastery, 09 Km away from Keylong at Tandi. This is the oldest monastery set up by Guru Padma Sambhav.** On return we trekked for 02 Km and then got into bus.

Keylong – New Delhi

Evening 1400 hrs on 23 Sep 04 we boarded the bus for New Delhi. At around 1600 hrs the entire valley weather deteriorated and we were at Rohtang Pass, snowfall started. We celebrated Miss Lalitha's birthday on this unique world's highest pass. Bus reached New Delhi on 0900 hrs on **24 Sep 04. Closing ceremony & certificate distribution was conducted at International youth hostel, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi at 1800 hrs on 24 Sep 04.** On 25 Sep 04 everybody departed New Delhi to different parts of country.

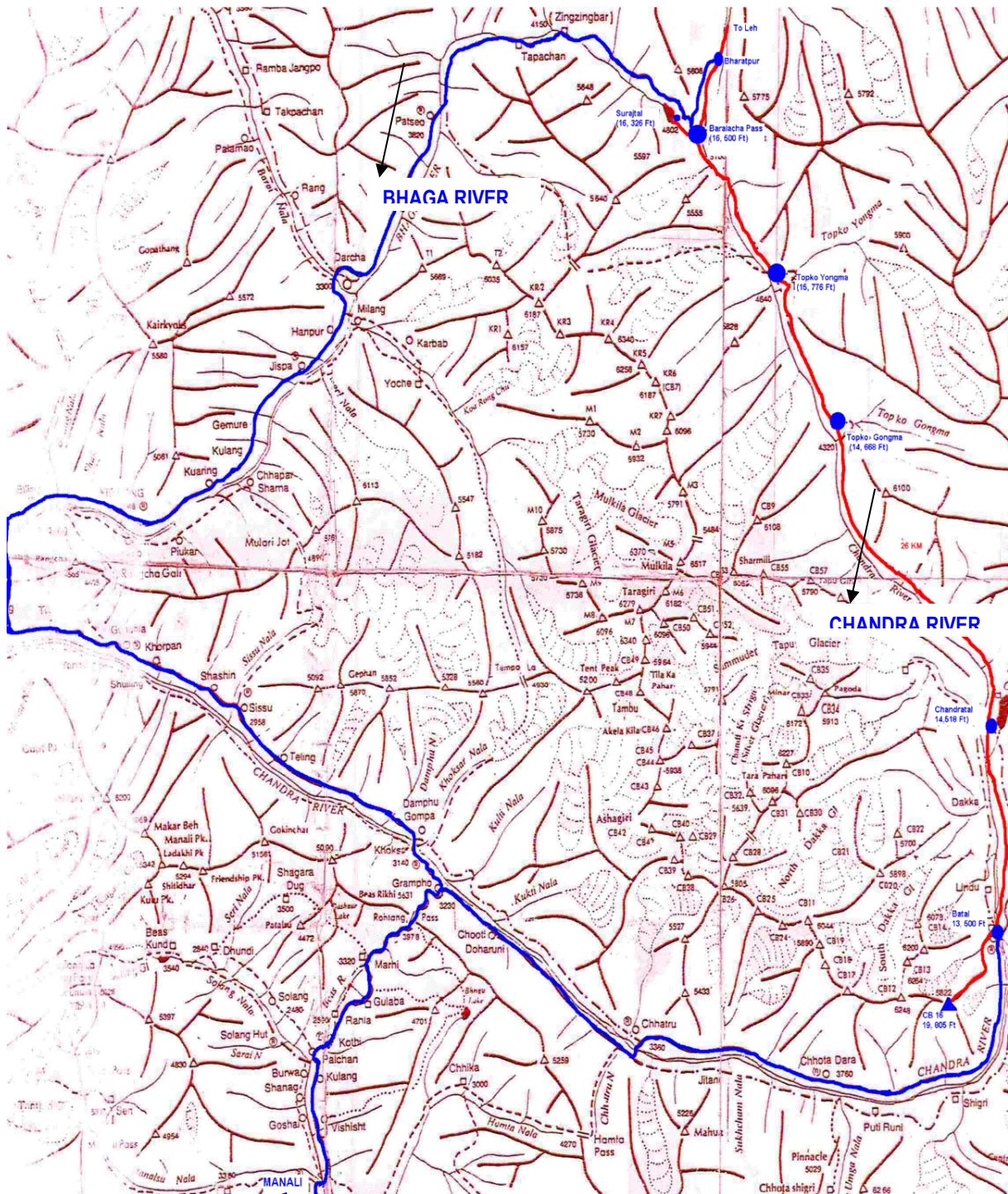
Conclusion

A 20 days of memorable climb cum trek in Himlayas and a Luvly memories to cherish forever has given a new beginning to life now with many new lessons learnt by all members like inculcating a sense of adventurism their by brining about a change in character. Developed discipline, determination and courage. It also enhanced athletic skills of Kenbudokas at high altitude. Their physiology & psychology had improved. The participation on the study of esoteric, yogic and yogachara elements like Ritods, Tamaskangs, Tsumo, Longum Pranayama was praiseworthy. The exposure to geography, flora and fauna and socio-economical conditions of people living in extreme difficult terrains was remarkable. Trek contributed many hours for cleaning of Himalayas. The whole range contributed to study of great heritage and religious importance of Himalayas in particular the spread of Buddhism. Expedition brought 15 different states, language and cultural peoples together to cultivate brotherhood among them.

Every good every thing has its own end. The entire expedition ended in a beautiful note and left behind the lovely memory to cherish forever. As great scholar Rahul Sankrischayan rightly said 'World is a University and travel is learning' ”.



A TEAM OF MARTIAL ARTS EXPERTS WITH THEIR GURU BABU T RAGHU AFTER MORNING SCHEDULE AT SURAJTAL



Chapter XII

Mount Pin Parvati Expedition (2005)

Across One of the Most Challenging High-Altitude Passes of the Himalayas (19,000 ft)

"The Himalayas reward not the strongest climber, but the one who possesses patience, perseverance, and unwavering faith."

The **Mount Pin Parvati Expedition of 2005** was one of the most demanding and memorable high-altitude adventures of my Himalayan journey. Rising to approximately **19,000 feet (5,800 metres)**, the **Pin Parvati region** forms a spectacular natural corridor connecting the lush **Parvati Valley of Kullu** with the stark, high-altitude desert landscape of the **Pin Valley in Spiti**, Himachal Pradesh. It is regarded as one of the most challenging mountain expeditions in the Indian Himalayas, demanding exceptional endurance, technical competence, and sound judgment.

The expedition traverses an extraordinary diversity of landscapes rarely encountered on a single Himalayan journey. Beginning amidst dense deodar and pine forests, the route gradually climbs through alpine meadows, glacial valleys, rocky moraines, snowfields, and massive glaciers before crossing the high mountain pass. Beyond the pass, the terrain changes dramatically into the cold, barren desert of Spiti, where towering cliffs, vast open valleys, and rugged mountains create an environment completely different from the lush Himalayan forests left behind.

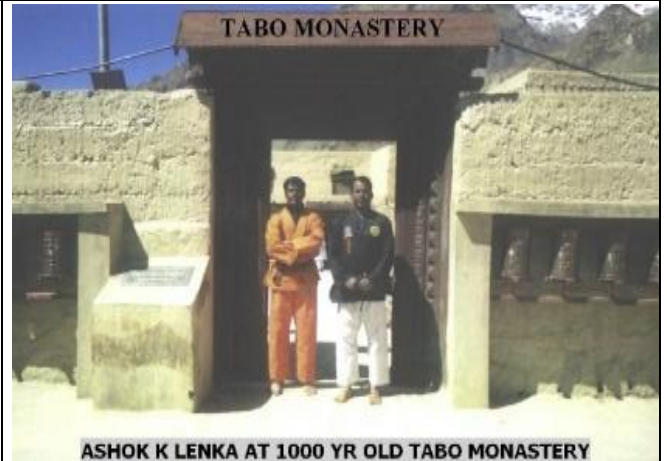
The terrain is physically demanding and constantly changing. Trekkers and mountaineers must negotiate steep ascents, glacier crossings, unstable moraine, snow-covered slopes, icy streams, loose rock, and exposed ridges. At elevations approaching **19,000 feet**, the reduced oxygen level significantly affects physical performance, making controlled breathing, proper acclimatisation, and disciplined pacing essential for safe progress. Sudden weather changes, freezing temperatures, strong winds, and snowfall further increase the challenges of the expedition.

The Pin Parvati region is renowned not only for its natural beauty but also for its remoteness. For several days, the expedition passes through isolated mountain wilderness where there are no roads, permanent settlements, or modern facilities. Survival depends upon teamwork, careful planning, efficient use of mountaineering equipment, and complete respect for the unpredictable forces of nature.

For me, the **Mount Pin Parvati Expedition** represented far more than another high-altitude challenge. It became another opportunity to integrate the principles of **martial arts, Indian Air Force training, mountaineering, and meditative awareness** into a unified philosophy of personal development. Every glacier crossing strengthened balance, every steep ascent cultivated perseverance, and every breath taken in the thin Himalayan air reinforced the importance of patience, self-control, and mental resilience.

The journey across the Pin Parvati region further strengthened my conviction that nature remains the greatest teacher of leadership, adaptability, humility, and endurance. Here, the mountains demanded complete harmony between body, mind, and environment, reminding me once again that true success in mountaineering is not measured solely by reaching a destination but by the wisdom, discipline, and self-discovery gained throughout the journey.

The **Mount Pin Parvati Expedition** became another remarkable chapter in my lifelong exploration of **Mountain Martial Arts**, where every Himalayan expedition deepened my understanding that the greatest summit any warrior can conquer is the summit within oneself.

2005 | Mount PinParvati (19,000 ft)



ବାଲେଶ୍ୱର, ଶନିବାର, ୨୭ ନଭେମ୍ବର ୨୦୦୫

ଭଦ୍ରକ ଯୁବକଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵିମାଳୟର ପିନ୍-ପାର୍ବତୀ ପର୍ବତାରୋହଣ

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୪ ଦଶା ଯାତ୍ରା କରି ଏମାନେ ହିମାଳୟସ୍ଥିତ ୧୯ହଜାର
ଫୁଟ ଉଚ୍ଚରେ ଅବସ୍ଥିତ ପିନ୍-ପାର୍ବତୀ ପର୍ବତ ଶୀର୍ଷରେ ପହଞ୍ଚି
ଥିଲେ । ବହୁ ଅଭିଯାତ୍ରୀଙ୍କ ହୃଦ୍ ଧ୍ବନନ କରି ହ୍ରାସ ହୋବାବୁ
କୃତ୍ରିମ ଅମ୍ଳାନ ପ୍ରୟୋଗରେ ଜୀବନ ରକ୍ଷା ହୋଇଥିଲା ।
ଆଉ କେତେକ ରକ୍ତ ଶିଥିଳତାଦି ଅସୁସ୍ଥତାରେ ଆକ୍ରାନ୍ତ
ହୋଇପଡ଼ିଥିଲେ ।

ଓଡ଼ିଶାର ୫ ନିଶା ଯୁବ ପ୍ରତିଭାଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ଗ୍ରୀଷ୍ମ ଦିବାର, ଜଳକଳେଇ କଳାବର ଲୋକଗୁରୁ ନାରାୟଣଙ୍କ ଦ୍ଵାରା ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ଏହି ଗଣିତ କଳାର ଉତ୍ସବ ଶୈଳ୍ୟ ସାମରିବେଳ କଳା କୌଶଳ ଓ ଶ୍ରଦ୍ଧା ସାମରେ ପ୍ରତିଷ୍ଠିତ ହୋଇଥିଲା । ପଦ୍ୟବର୍ଣ୍ଣନା ଶ୍ଵାପଦ୍ୟକୁଳ ପଥରେ ପାର୍ବତ୍ୟ ଛାତ୍ର ଶିକ୍ଷାରୀ ଚରଣାଞ୍ଚଳୀୟ ରଞ୍ଜୟାଙ୍କ ପିତାପାଘଙ୍କ ପଦବିଧି ଦେଖିଥିଲେ ଏବଂ ସ୍ଵଳ୍ପଦାନୁରୂପ ପୋମାନଙ୍କ ଶାରୀରିକ ଚାପ ବାସ୍ତୁ ଅନୁବନ୍ଧ କରିଥିଲେ । ଖୁସୀହୃଦିକ ଅଭିନୟରେ ପ୍ରସଙ୍ଗମା ପ୍ରାପ୍ତ ଏହି ୫ଜଣ ଯୁବ ପ୍ରତିଭାଙ୍କ ପାଇଁ ଓଡ଼ିଶା ଆଜି ଗତିବି ।

शुक्रवार ■ दि. १४-१०-२००५ ■ संवत् : २०५१ ■ आश्वी सुद १२ ■ पान्ना १२ ■ क्रिमत : ३।. २-०० ■ Regd. No. G. KCH-3/05. ■ फोन : २५२०८०/८१ इंदौर :

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પીન-પાર્વતી પર્વત પર આરોહણ બાદ ભારતીય ધ્વજ સાથે કચ્છના સાહસિકો દેખાય છે.

ભારે વર્ષા વચ્ચે હિમાલયમાં ૧૯૦૦૦ ફૂટની ઊંચાઈએ ટ્રેકિંગનો રોમાંચ

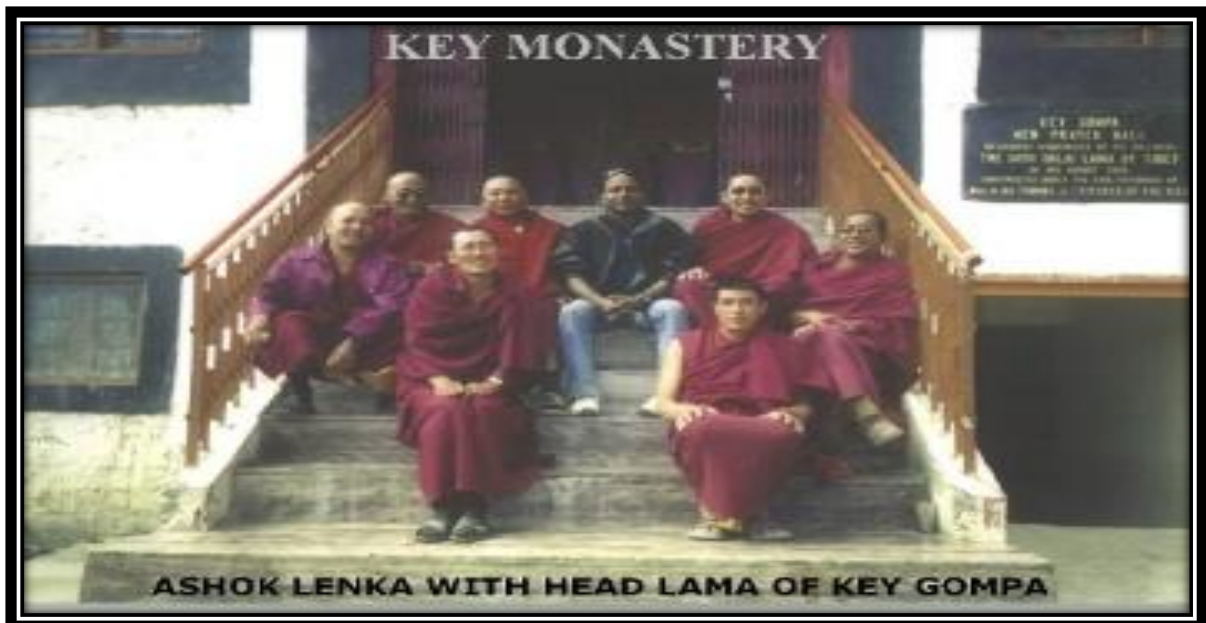
મુજ, તા. ૧૩ : એડવૅન્ચર
સ્પોર્ટ્સ એસોસિયેશન ઓફ
ઈન્ડિયાના નેજા હેઠળ સપ્ટેમ્બર
માસમાં ૧૬ રાજ્યોના ૬૮
સભ્યોએ ૧૮૦૦૦ ફૂટની
ગિરાઈએ આવેલા પીનાપાર્વતી
પર્વત પર ટ્રેકિંગ અભિયાન કર્યું
હતું. ભુજના પણ ત્રણ યુવાનો તેમાં
જોડાયા હતા. ભારે વરસાદને લીધે
ભેખડો ઘસી પડવાના બંનાવો વચ્ચે
પણ આ દુકોનોએ હિમાલયના
પર્વતોમાં ભ્રમણ ચાલુ રાખ્યું હતું.

આ ટીમમાં માર્શલ આર્ટ્સના
વીમ વિશેષજ્ઞ હતા. ૧૯૯૭થી
હિમાલયના પહાડો પર ટ્રેકિંગ
કરતી ટીમને આ વખતે જો કે

પરાજી હવામાનને લીધે
શાઓલીનની મૂળ કલા સૈલમના
અભ્યાસમાં વિઘ્ન સર્જયું હતું.

પણ જ્યારે વરસાદનેય
અવગણીને દીમે હિમાચલપ્રદેશની
લાહોલ સ્પીતી ખીણમાં પડથી
પીન-પાર્વતી પર ટ્રેકિંગ શરૂ કર્યું
હતું અને ૧૫ સપ્ટેમ્બરે
પર્વતારોહણ પૂર્ણ થયું હતું. દીમનું
વડપણ એસી. મા મંત્રી આચાર્ય
બાબુ ટી. રઘુએ સંભાળ્યું હતું.

આ ટ્રેકિંગ અભિયાનમાં
ભુજના અશોકકુમાર લેન્કા, નરેન્દ્ર
બહાદુરસિંહ તથા સંજીવ લામ્યા
પણ જોડાયા હતા. ટીમ ૨૯ સપ્ટેમ્બરે
નવી દિલ્હી પરત ફરી હતી.



2005 : PIN-PARVATI PASS/PEAK HIGH ALTITUDE MOUNTAINEERING EXPEDITION

Location

The expedition to **Pin-Parvati Pass/Peak** was organised by **Adventure Sports Association of India, Bangalore** from **05 Sep 05 to 24 Sep 05**. Pin-Parvati Pass situated in the Spiti Valley of **Zaskar range** of Himalayas in the Lahaul Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh. Located at **Longitude 77° 31', latitude 32 ° 19'** and at an altitude of **19,000 feet**. As the pass/peak is a common point for both Pin & Parvati Valley hence the name is Pin Parvati. The peak is accessible from either side.



Flag off

The expedition was flagged off by **Chief Minister of Karnataka Mr. Dharam Singh** on **29 Aug 04** at Bangalore. Team departed from New Delhi on **05 Sep 04**.

Expedition Administration

The expedition was lead by **Acharya Babu T Raghu**. Administrative in charge **Mr. Sunil Kumar**, Expedition coordinating Officer and Filming **Mr. Ashok Kumar Lenka**, Technical training in charges **Mr. PR Reji** and **Mr VN Mishra** and Ladies liason officer **Miss GS Priyanka**. All above are expert in Martial arts (Kenbudo) in different capacities.

Teams

A total of **68 Young and energetic climber of which 11 were girls from 18 States** of India joined the expedition. The states represented were New Delhi, Haryana, UP, Uttranchal, Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, AP, Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Jharkand, Tamilnadu, Chattisgarh, Assam and Himachal Pradesh. **Teams were named after prominent rivers of India the Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Brahma Putra, Tunga Bhadra, Sutlej, Beas, Netravathi, Saraswati and Krishna. Out of 68 members, 35 were students of Martial arts (Kenbudo) and out of 35, 15 were of Black Belts.**



Aim & Objective of Expedition

Expedition had different objective to be achieved. Those were as follows: -

“To develop discipline. To their by brining about a change in of youth and put it into more positive



national leaders in of life and teach them leadership qualities. To develop athletic skills at high altitude. To study on high altitude physiological changes caused by prevailing environment. To Study in esoteric, yogic and yogachara elements like Ritods,



inculcate a sense of adventurism, character. Channelise the energies direction. Bring youth close to different walk



Tamaskangs, Tsumo, Longum Pranayama etc and allow the body to undergo some austerities. Expo|sure to geography, flora and fauna and socio-economical conditions of people living in extreme difficult terrains. Keeping Himalayas clean. Exposure the youth to great heritage and religious importance of Himalayas. Bringing different states, language, cultural peoples together and cultivate brotherhood among them. Teach them management and survival skills in crisis time.

Major Achievement's

Major achievements of expedition were successful climbing of **Peak PIN-PARVATI (19, 000 ft)**. Trekking a distance of **85 Km on a mountainous route at an altitude of 13500 feet to 19000feet**. Practicing **esoteric element of martial arts at various heights of Himalayas** including Yoga, Yogachara & meditation. **Bringing all 68 members back to plains unhurt**. Despite the bad weather, rain & snow fall the team could make it the summit.

Brief Narrative

New Delhi – KULU-KAZA-MUD

Expedition members boarded the bus at **ISBT New Delhi on 05 Sep 04**. Bus headed to our destination **MUD** via Chandigarh, Kulu, Manali, Rohtang Pass (**13, 050 ft**), Chhatru, Chhota Dara, Batal, Kunjum Pass, Spiti Valley, Losar, Kaza on the bank of Chandra River in Lahaul & Spiti River in Spiti. **On 06 Sep 04 at 1500 hrs** team arrived at MUD and camped, leaving 05 member at Kaza, those suffering from high altitude sickness. Here a total of 11 tents and one kitchen tent was erected.

MUD : Height 13, 500 ft

The 'MUD' in the Pin Valley has presented a magnificent look surrounded by groups of Mountains, Pin river and high raised snow clouded peaks. Here we camped for 02 days for acclimatization. At Mud, our Leader imparted us extensive training on SAILUM subjects such as Tsumo and Lungum and athletic skills, the esoteric element of martial arts philosophy. While practicing we were grasping for the breath due to low oxygen availability and temperature swinging down to minus due to high pitch wind. **Such practice continued at all camping sites at different heights of Himalayas.**

MUD – Chilpatta Maidan Height 13, 500 ft Trek Distance: 18 Km

Adventure sports association of India this year went on to climb PIN-PARVATI PEAK/PASS with its 68 member troop from 16 different states of India from 05 Sep to 28 Sep 05 under the leadership of Acharya Babu T Raghu Secretary ASAI. Members hailed from colleges, universities & different state and central government departments of India.

As every year since 1997, ASAI team has its own artistic touch of martial arts calibre members as part of its expedition team. SAILUM the art practiced by them is "THE ORIGIN OF SHAOLIN". Originally was mastered by GURU NAGARJUNA/ BODI DHARMA. Apart from mountaineering this is a self test period for all these Sadhakas. The high altitude practice with as low as 40% availability of oxygen and increased pressurization is called LUNGUM & TSUMO. This time ASAI too had 20 tough & seasoned Black Belts in the expedition.

This year during the expedition the practice of SAILUM was bit disturbed due to weather God? As it rained & rained during the expedition period mercilessly resulting in landslide & heavy snowfall in upper ridges. This unusual monsoon was experienced in almost all parts of India during September 05. All most all treks were suspended in the Himalayan region but the ASAI team dared the Himalayas.

In spite of the torrential rain, thunder storm, land slide, increased burg fall & snowfall the ASAI, SAILUM sadhakas dared the mountain. The struggle existed amidst the heavy rain & snowfall from 07 Sep till 14 Sep 05. During the period team started the climb from the last human hebetated small village of 200 habitants named MUD in PIN valley of Lahaul Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh. Trek went on to CHILPATTA MAIDAN, BASE CAMP, ADVANCE BASE CAMP & finally **PIN-PARVATI PEAK/PASS was conquered on 15 Sep 05 at 1200 hrs after continuous climb of 05 hrs to the top.**

Trek was planned to venture through the pass to the other side of the peak. Which it failed due to a waist deep snow on top of the Pin-Parvati pass. Our dream of trekking in the Parvati Valley froze. We came back blaming weather God. Joy was on summitting but sorrow was in suspending the expedition amidst. Adventure welcomed us both on climb & return path. It sucked our blood, chilled our nerves & bone marrows. The path was so deadly due to continuous rain fall & Pin River swollen to its full size. River PIN was so deadly it tried to sweep us away on crossing it. Temperature dripped to all time minus in the valley and all members shivering out of drenched cloth and striving for heat else wise they may undergo hypothermia. Many university girls & boys suffered High altitude Mountain sickness & some of them Acute mountain sickness. Some were administered artificial Oxygen by the team doctor. Fear prevailed in all eleven tents of the camp. Adventure took its real shape. Cardio vascular muscle worked hard & antibodies rushed every micro second. I enjoyed it. It's a lovely memory to cherish for ever. Finally on 20th morning weather opened up for one day and we boarded the bus to KAZA. Bus faced 10 landslides in crossing from MUD to KAZA.

KAZA is a beautiful township in Spiti district with tribal Buddhist culture. In these coming 03 days we decided to focus on study of Himalayan Buddhism, Sailum practice & mountain cleanliness of Himalayas. As a part of this move we visited several monasteries of this region. The remarkable among these are TABO, KEE & KEBBAR monasteries. TABO is one of the oldest monasteries of India i.e. 1000 year old. It falls 10 Km away from China boarder. KAZA is 11 hrs journey from Manali via Rohtang Pass (13, 500 ft), Lahaul Valley, Kunjum pass (15, 050ft) and Spiti Valley. River Spiti flows down the township. Lahaul Spiti district is famous for Ibex & Snow leopard. Expedition team could find tale-tale signs of snow leopard. It found snow leopard droppings & paw marks. Several left outs of mountain goats that must have fallen victim to snow leopard.

Orissa Adventure Sports Association, represented with 05 of its brave members with Mr Ashok Kumar Lenka, Black Belt from Bhadrak as leader. Others were Mr Shyam Sunder Panda from Aska, Mr Ranjan from Bhubaneswar, Mr Sanat Samanta from Cuttack & Mr Jeetendra Das from Berhampur. All summited the PIN-PARVATI PEAK. Team retuned to New Delhi on 29 Sep 05.

PIN-PARVATI EXPEDITION

1.	<u>Expedition Leader:</u>	Babu T Raghu
2.	Total Participants:	68
3.	Total	16
4.	Peak Summitted	60
5.	Constraints:	Unusual monsoon almost all part of country.
6.	No. of Martial artists	60
7.	No. of Black Belts	25
8.	Monasteries at KAZA:	1000 YEAR OLD - TABO, KEE and KEEBAR

Mount Pin Parvati Expedition (2005)

Through Snow, Rain, and the Spirit of the Himalayas

The **Mount Pin Parvati Expedition of September 2005** proved to be one of the most challenging and memorable journeys of my mountaineering career. The expedition tested not only our physical endurance but also our patience, leadership, teamwork, and ability to survive under relentless Himalayan weather conditions. Continuous rain, heavy snowfall, landslides, and difficult terrain accompanied us throughout much of the expedition, transforming every stage of the journey into a lesson in perseverance.

Preparation and Approach

The expedition commenced from **Mud Village**, the last inhabited settlement in the Pin Valley region. On **7 September 2005**, the weather was favourable, allowing the team to complete final preparations. The following day was devoted to hiring porters and mules, organising loads, and conducting martial arts practice sessions to maintain physical readiness and team morale.

On **9 September**, the expedition moved from **Mud to Chilpatta Maidan**, a beautiful alpine camping ground that served as an important staging area. The surrounding landscape was dominated by rugged mountains, glacial streams, and vast open meadows, offering a glimpse of the challenges that lay ahead.

The next day, a sixteen-member advance party, accompanied by porters and pack animals carrying expedition equipment and supplies, moved towards Base Camp. The remaining members stayed at Chilpatta Maidan to continue acclimatisation and await further instructions.

Battling the Elements

From **11 September onwards**, the expedition faced severe weather conditions. Persistent rain and snowfall swept across the mountains, slowing progress and testing the determination of every participant.

A team of climbers was dispatched to retrieve rations from Base Camp while senior members, including **V.N. Mishra** and **S.S. Panda**, remained at the Advance Base Camp. Despite difficult conditions, the sixteen-member advance team continued towards Camp I of the Pin Parvati route.

The weather deteriorated further on **12 and 13 September**. Continuous rain prevented movement, forcing the team to remain camped and conserve energy. The mountains reminded us that no amount of planning can overcome the authority of nature. Patience became our greatest asset.

Move to Advance Base Camp

On **14 September**, a brief improvement in weather allowed the majority of the team to move towards Advance Base Camp. Upon arrival, we were greeted by the advance party, whose cheerful faces concealed the hardships they had endured during the previous three days. Heavy snowfall, freezing temperatures, and relentless rain had made sleep almost impossible.

After assessing the situation, the expedition leader made a strategic decision. Most of the newly arrived members were instructed to return to Base Camp, while a small summit team comprising the leader, myself (**Ashok Kumar Lenka**), **Sunil Kumar, Rao**, and a few others remained at Advance Base Camp to prepare for the summit attempt.

Summit Day

15 September 2005 became the defining day of the expedition. All capable members were called forward for the summit push, while a few sick participants remained behind. Excitement filled the camp

as everyone prepared to attempt the pass. Due to heavy snowfall and unstable conditions, there was no time for rest. Climbers arriving from Base Camp immediately joined the ascent.

The climb was physically exhausting. Deep snow, freezing winds, and high altitude made every step a challenge. In several sections, the snow reached waist depth, requiring immense effort to break trail. Despite these difficulties, the first summit group successfully reached the objective, followed shortly by myself, **S.S. Panda**, university students from Bangalore, and other team members. At approximately **1200 hours**, we achieved our objective and stood amidst the magnificent Himalayan panorama.

However, deteriorating weather and dangerously deep snow convinced the leader not to proceed further towards the Spiti side of the pass. The safety of the team remained paramount. In mountaineering, wisdom often lies in knowing when to stop. Having successfully achieved the climb, the team began its descent.

Retreat Through Storms

The following day, another group led by **Acharya Babu T. Raghu**, along with Sunil and Panda, completed their ascent while I assumed responsibility for leading a large contingent back towards **Mud Village**. Heavy rain returned during the night and continued without interruption. The weather transformed mountain streams into raging torrents and caused rivers to swell dramatically.

On **17 September**, torrential rainfall created severe difficulties throughout the valley. River water became muddy and contaminated, forcing us to fetch drinking water from distant sources. Many members arrived soaked, exhausted, and shivering from cold exposure. Despite these hardships, teamwork prevailed. Food prepared under difficult conditions by **G. Singh and his team** provided much-needed warmth and morale.

Throughout the day, coordination with local authorities and support personnel became essential to ensure the safe movement of climbers trapped by weather and landslides.

Journey to Kaza

On **18 September**, despite continuing rain, the team managed to dismantle camp and proceed towards **Kaza**, the administrative headquarters of Spiti Valley. The journey was far from easy. Landslides repeatedly blocked roads, vehicles suffered mechanical problems, and the team often had to assist in clearing debris under adverse weather conditions. Upon reaching Kaza, the condition of many participants necessitated immediate shelter. A lodge was arranged where exhausted climbers could recover from days of exposure to cold and rain.

The following day, fresh landslides once again disrupted communications and transportation. Concern remained regarding members still en route from Mud Village. Fortunately, by evening, road-clearing efforts by the **Border Roads Organisation** and district authorities restored access, bringing reassurance that the remaining team members would arrive safely.

Martial Arts in the High Himalayas

On **20 September**, while awaiting the arrival of the remaining members, morning martial arts practice was conducted by the Sadhakas of the camp. I participated actively and guided senior practitioners, emphasising one of the core principles that had gradually emerged through my years of mountain training—the unification of body, mind, and internal energy. Amid the rarefied air of the Himalayas, I explained the significance of experiencing **Ki**, the inner life force that connects awareness, breathing, movement, and consciousness.

The mountains themselves provided the perfect environment to understand these teachings. Participants experienced how disciplined breathing, concentration, and physical effort could merge into a single harmonious state. Later that morning, the arrival of the final group from Mud Village was greeted with

celebration and relief. After days of uncertainty, the entire expedition team was reunited, marking the successful completion of the expedition.

Exploring the Buddhist Heartland of Spiti

The expedition concluded with visits to some of the most significant Buddhist centres in the Himalayas. Kaza, situated on the banks of the **Spiti River**, is surrounded by towering mountains and ancient monasteries that preserve centuries of Buddhist tradition. On **21 September**, we visited the world-renowned **Tabo Monastery**, founded over a thousand years ago by **Yeshe-Ö** and **Rinchen Zangpo**. We explored ancient meditation caves known as **Tamaskangs** and **Ritods**, where Buddhist monks had spent years in solitary meditation.

These caves held special significance for me. They reinforced my growing understanding of the connection between martial arts, meditation, and the Himalayan spiritual traditions that had influenced practitioners for centuries.

The following day, we travelled to **Kibber**, one of the world's highest permanently inhabited villages, situated at approximately **14,000 feet**. The spectacular landscape and traditional Buddhist culture offered a rare glimpse into life at extreme altitude. We also visited the famous **Key Monastery**, perched dramatically on a hilltop overlooking the Spiti Valley.

Conclusion

On **23 September 2005**, mindful of further snowfall, landslides, and worsening weather, we commenced our return journey to New Delhi.

The Pin Parvati Expedition became much more than a mountaineering venture. It was a profound lesson in endurance, leadership, teamwork, adaptability, and spiritual reflection. The relentless rain, deep snow, and harsh conditions challenged us physically, yet they also revealed the extraordinary strength of the human spirit.

For me, this expedition reinforced a belief that had been growing through years of mountain exploration: the Himalayas are not merely places to climb—they are living classrooms where martial discipline, meditation, adventure, and self-discovery unite into a single path of lifelong learning.



Chapter XIII

2006: Basic Mountaineering Course At HMI

Basic Mountaineering Course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling (2006)

Building the Foundation of a Mountaineer

"Mountaineering is not merely the art of climbing mountains; it is the science of leadership, survival, teamwork, and self-discipline."

The year 2006 marked a significant turning point in my mountaineering journey when I successfully underwent the Basic Mountaineering Course (BMC) at the prestigious Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling. Established in 1954 under the guidance of Tenzing Norgay, one of the first two climbers to summit Mount Everest in 1953, HMI is regarded as one of the finest mountaineering institutions in the world. For decades, it has trained military personnel, adventure enthusiasts, professional mountaineers, and international climbers, producing some of India's most accomplished mountaineers.

The Basic Mountaineering Course is the foundation programme designed to transform an adventure enthusiast into a disciplined mountaineer capable of surviving and operating safely in the high Himalayas. The course combines theoretical knowledge with rigorous practical training under experienced instructors in some of the most demanding mountain environments. Every activity is carefully structured to develop physical fitness, technical competence, leadership, teamwork, environmental awareness, and mental resilience.

The course begins with intensive physical conditioning, endurance training, and acclimatisation before gradually introducing trainees to progressively more challenging mountain terrain. Participants learn the fundamentals of rock craft, snow craft, and ice craft, enabling them to move confidently over rocks, glaciers, steep snow slopes, and exposed ridges. Training includes climbing and descending techniques, rope handling, knotting, belaying, rappelling, jumaring, glacier travel, river crossing, and the proper use of mountaineering equipment such as ice axes, crampons, ropes, harnesses, helmets, carabiners, snow anchors, and rescue systems.

One of the most important aspects of the course is learning mountain survival. Participants are trained in route planning, camp establishment, high-altitude hygiene, weather observation, navigation using maps and compass, avalanche awareness, emergency rescue procedures, casualty evacuation, and risk management. Equal emphasis is placed on teamwork, leadership, communication, and decision-making under difficult conditions, qualities that are essential for safe mountaineering.

The course also instils a deep respect for the fragile Himalayan ecosystem. Trainees are taught the ethics of responsible mountaineering, environmental conservation, waste management, and the principle of "Leave No Trace," ensuring that the mountains remain protected for future generations.

For me, attending the Basic Mountaineering Course at HMI was much more than acquiring technical climbing skills. It provided scientific understanding of mountaineering, refined the knowledge gained from my previous expeditions, and strengthened the connection between Indian Air Force discipline, martial arts, and high-altitude adventure. Every lesson reinforced my belief that mountaineering is not merely about reaching a summit but about developing courage, patience, humility, leadership, and the ability to remain calm under extreme circumstances.

The knowledge and practical skills gained during this course became the cornerstone of my future Himalayan expeditions and greatly influenced my philosophy of Mountain Martial Arts. The training at HMI enabled me to integrate technical mountaineering, martial discipline, adventure sports, and

nature-based learning into a comprehensive system that I would later share with hundreds of students, adventure enthusiasts, Air Warriors, and young mountaineers across India.

Completing the Basic Mountaineering Course was not the culmination of my mountaineering journey; rather, it marked the beginning of a higher level of exploration, where every subsequent expedition was undertaken with greater confidence, technical competence, safety awareness, and a deeper appreciation of the timeless lessons taught by the Himalayas.

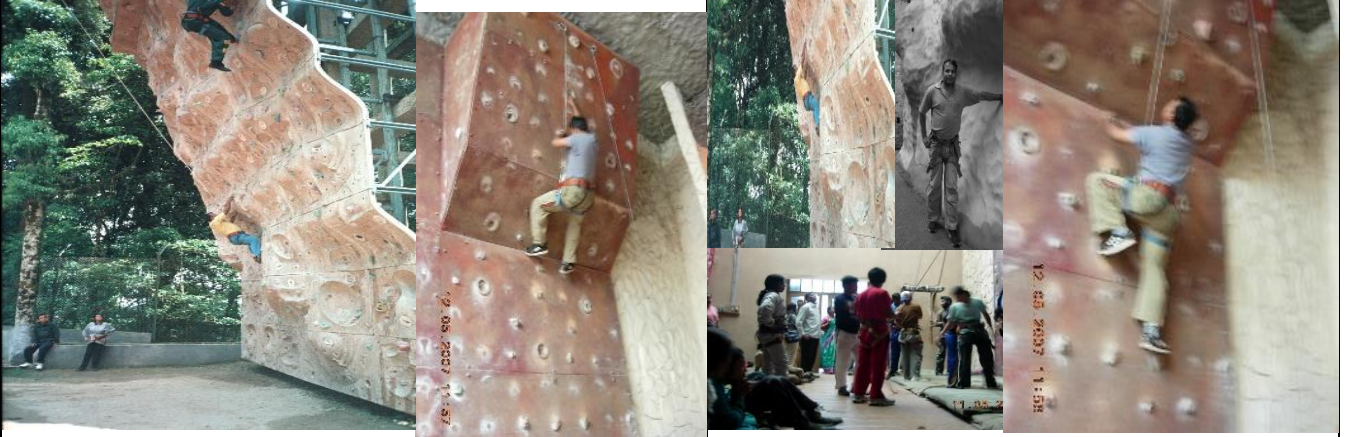
Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI) Darjeeling



Marathon at HMI



Sports Climbing At HMI



Rock Climbing at HMI



Trek To Tiger Hill at HMI



Ice Climb at HMI



Chapter XIV

2006 Mount Rehnok Peak AT HMI



Mount Renok Peak Expedition (2006)

The First Himalayan Summit During the Basic Mountaineering Course

"Every accomplished mountaineer remembers the mountain where training became reality."

As part of the Basic Mountaineering Course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI), Darjeeling, every trainee is required to undertake a high-altitude expedition to apply the knowledge and skills acquired during the course. For our batch, this challenge was the ascent of Mount Renok Peak, situated in the eastern Himalayas of Sikkim, at an elevation of approximately 16,500 feet (5,030 metres). Although not among the highest Himalayan peaks, Renok is regarded as one of the most important training mountains in Indian mountaineering because it provides an ideal environment for transforming trainees into confident and competent mountaineers.

Unlike classroom instruction or practice on isolated rock faces, Mount Renok exposes trainees to the realities of a true Himalayan expedition. The journey begins with long approach marches through dense rhododendron and conifer forests, followed by alpine meadows, rocky moraines, glaciers, and snow-covered slopes before reaching the higher camps. Every stage of the climb introduces progressively more demanding terrain, requiring trainees to apply the mountaineering techniques learned during the course.

The terrain around Mount Renok presents an ideal combination of rock, snow, and ice. Climbers negotiate steep snow slopes, glacier travel, rocky ridges, crevasses, and exposed sections while carrying personal equipment and working as rope teams. The climb provides practical experience in using ice axes, crampons, ropes, harnesses, carabiners, snow anchors, fixed ropes, belaying systems, and glacier rescue techniques. Every movement demands precision, balance, teamwork, and complete trust in fellow climbers.

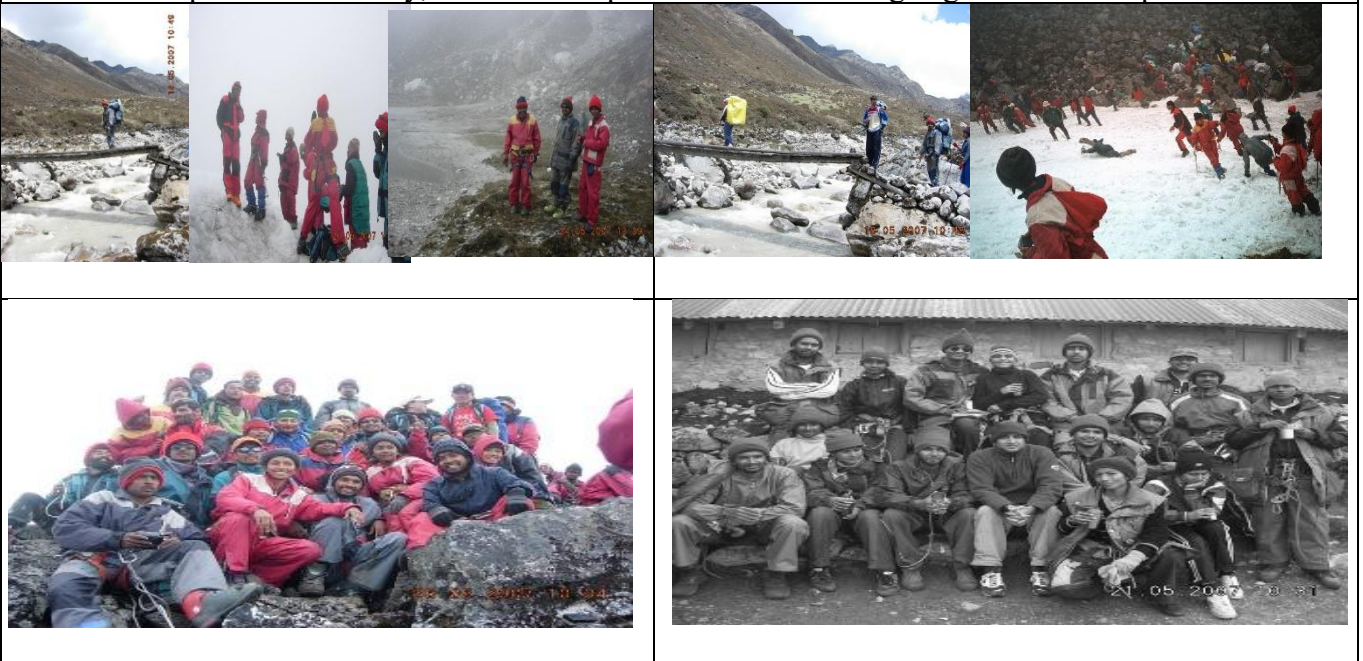
For students of the Basic Mountaineering Course, the ascent of Mount Renok is much more than a summit attempt—it is the practical examination of everything they have learned during weeks of rigorous training. It tests physical fitness, technical competence, leadership, discipline, acclimatisation, decision-making, and mental resilience under genuine high-altitude conditions. The mountain also teaches an invaluable lesson: success depends not upon individual strength alone but upon teamwork, careful planning, mutual support, and strict adherence to safety procedures.

For me, climbing Mount Renok represented a significant milestone in my Himalayan journey. My previous expeditions had provided valuable experience in mountains, glaciers, and high-altitude trekking, but HMI gave those experiences scientific structure and technical refinement. Every technique learned during the course—from rope management and glacier travel to snow craft and rescue procedures—came alive on the slopes of Renok.

As a practitioner of Taekwondo, an Indian Air Force Air Warrior, and an adventure enthusiast, I found a remarkable connection between martial arts and mountaineering. Balance, controlled breathing, concentration, discipline, and efficient movement—qualities cultivated through years of martial arts practice—proved equally essential while climbing snow-covered slopes and negotiating glaciated terrain. The mountain reinforced my belief that true martial training prepares an individual not only for competition but also for overcoming the challenges presented by nature.

Standing on the summit of Mount Renok, surrounded by the magnificent panorama of the eastern Himalayas, I experienced the profound satisfaction that comes from disciplined preparation and collective effort. The ascent was not simply about reaching another Himalayan peak; it symbolised the successful transition from a student of mountaineering to a competent climber capable of undertaking greater challenges in the years ahead.

For every trainee at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, Mount Renok is more than a training peak—it is a mountain of transformation. It is here that technical skills become practical experience, confidence replaces uncertainty, and the true spirit of mountaineering begins to take shape



Chapter XV

2007 | Siachen High Altitude Expedition (16,500 ft)

- **Location:** Siachen Glacier (The Highest Battlefield).
- **Climate:** Extreme cold (-30°C to -50°C), blizzards, and permanent ice.
- **Internal Practice:** Total Mastery of Tummo. Used esoteric heat-generation to survive High Altitude Warfare and Survival Training at the Army Battle School without succumbing to the environment.



Siachen High Altitude Expedition (2007) Indian Air Force Adventure Cell Into the World's Highest Battlefield (16,500 ft)

"Some mountains test your strength. Siachen tests your very will to survive."

The year 2007 marked one of the most prestigious and demanding milestones of my life when I was selected by the Indian Air Force Adventure Cell to participate in the Siachen High Altitude Expedition. For every Air Warrior, serving or training in Siachen Glacier is not merely another adventure expedition—it is a privilege, an honour, and one of the highest tests of physical endurance, military discipline, and mental resilience.

Having already served for many years as an Indian Air Force Air Warrior, I had been shaped by the Service's core values of discipline, courage, integrity, teamwork, and professionalism. My military career had provided me with extensive exposure to operational environments across India, while my continuous involvement in adventure sports, Taekwondo, mountaineering, yoga, and meditation had prepared me physically and mentally for increasingly demanding expeditions. Previous climbs in the Himalayas had strengthened my endurance, but Siachen represented an entirely different level of challenge—one where survival itself became the primary objective.

Located in the eastern Karakoram Range, Siachen Glacier is widely recognised as the world's highest battlefield. Stretching over approximately 76 kilometres, the glacier is covered by permanent snow and ice, with elevations ranging from 12,000 to over 21,000 feet. Temperatures frequently fall between -30°C and -50°C , while blizzards, whiteouts, crevasses, avalanches, hurricane-force winds, and oxygen-deficient conditions create one of the harshest environments inhabited by human beings. Every movement on the glacier demands absolute discipline, meticulous planning, and complete trust in fellow team members.

The expedition was conducted under the guidance of the Indian Air Force Adventure Cell, with specialised training support from the Indian Army's High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS) and experienced military instructors. The programme was designed not merely to build mountaineering skills but to prepare personnel for operating safely in one of the world's most unforgiving environments. It included glacier movement, ice craft, crevasse rescue, fixed-rope climbing, snow survival, avalanche

awareness, high-altitude warfare techniques, leadership under extreme conditions, and emergency response procedures.

For me, Siachen represented the culmination of nearly a decade of Himalayan expeditions and adventure training. Every lesson learned from the mountains, jungles, deserts, and river beds found practical application on the glacier. The balance developed through Taekwondo, the discipline instilled by the Indian Air Force, the endurance cultivated through mountaineering, and the mental composure strengthened by years of yoga and meditation worked together in complete harmony.

One of the most profound aspects of this expedition was the application of advanced breathing, concentration, and meditative practices inspired by the Himalayan traditions I had been studying for years. Drawing upon principles associated with Tummo (Inner Heat Meditation), controlled diaphragmatic breathing, and deep mental concentration, I found that maintaining calm awareness helped me regulate my response to the severe cold, conserve energy, and remain mentally focused during prolonged exposure to the extreme environment. While these practices did not replace military survival techniques or specialised cold-weather equipment, they became valuable personal tools that complemented the rigorous training provided by the Indian Armed Forces.

Standing amidst the endless fields of ice and snow, I realised that Siachen is far more than a battlefield. It is a place where nature constantly reminds every soldier and mountaineer of the importance of humility, discipline, vigilance, and teamwork. Here, human ambition is secondary to survival, and success is measured not by conquest but by preparation, resilience, and the safe return of every member of the team.

The Siachen High Altitude Expedition became one of the defining experiences of my life. It reaffirmed my belief that the highest form of martial training extends beyond combat techniques—it is the ability to maintain clarity of mind, courage under adversity, compassion for teammates, and unwavering discipline when confronted by the most extreme conditions on Earth.

Looking back today, I regard Siachen not simply as another expedition but as the ultimate classroom where the values of the Indian Air Force, the science of mountaineering, the philosophy of martial arts, and the wisdom of the Himalayas converged into one extraordinary experience. It strengthened my conviction that a true warrior is not defined by the battles he fights, but by the character he develops while facing the greatest challenges that nature can present.

Receiving Training from Siachin Battle School





IAF Adventure Cell Imparting Training to Air force Station Thoise





Trek to OP Baba Shrine





Chapter XVI

IAF Sponcered Advance Moutainerring Refresher Course At Damas, Manali For Mount Hanuman Tibba



Advance Mountaineering Refresher Course (2007) Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS), Manali : Sponsored by the Indian Air Force Adventure Cell

"The summit is only the visible goal. True success is built during the countless hours of preparation before the climb."

Following my successful participation in the Siachen High Altitude Expedition, I was once again nominated by the Indian Air Force Adventure Cell to undergo a Special Advance Mountaineering Refresher Course at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS), Manali, Himachal Pradesh. This specialised training programme was organised exclusively to prepare the expedition team for the ascent of Mount Hanuman Tibba, one of the most technically demanding and challenging peaks in the Pir Panjal Range of the Himalayas.

The training was conducted in the high-altitude mountain environment around Dhundi, near Solang Valley, where glaciers, snowfields, rocky ridges, ice walls, and alpine terrain closely resemble the conditions encountered on Hanuman Tibba. The region serves as an ideal natural training ground for advanced mountaineering, allowing climbers to refine their technical skills under realistic Himalayan conditions before undertaking a major expedition.

Unlike the Basic Mountaineering Course, the Advance Mountaineering Refresher Course is intended for experienced mountaineers who have already completed formal mountaineering training and participated in high-altitude expeditions. Its primary objective is to refresh, upgrade, and standardise advanced climbing techniques while preparing participants to safely operate in extremely demanding mountain environments.

The course included intensive practical training in advanced rock craft, snow craft, and ice craft, with special emphasis on glacier travel, crevasse rescue, fixed-rope installation, lead climbing, anchor building, jumaring, rappelling, self-arrest using the ice axe, rope management, and movement over steep snow and ice. Participants repeatedly practised the correct use of crampons, ice axes, harnesses, helmets, ascenders, descenders, carabiners, snow stakes, ice screws, and rescue systems, ensuring that every technique became instinctive under operational conditions.

Special attention was also given to expedition planning, avalanche awareness, weather interpretation, camp management, navigation, emergency rescue procedures, casualty evacuation, communication, and leadership under high-altitude conditions. These exercises strengthened not only individual competence but also teamwork, mutual trust, and disciplined decision-making—qualities that are indispensable for successful Himalayan expeditions.

As an Indian Air Force Air Warrior, I greatly appreciated the systematic and professional approach adopted by the Adventure Cell and the instructors of ABVIMAS. The training reflected the core values of the Indian Air Force—discipline, precision, leadership, teamwork, and operational excellence. Combined with my previous Himalayan expeditions and years of martial arts practice, the course significantly enhanced my technical proficiency, confidence, and preparedness for the formidable challenge of Mount Hanuman Tibba.

For me, the refresher course represented much more than technical training. It reaffirmed the close relationship between martial arts, mountaineering, and military leadership. Every rope exercise demanded concentration; every glacier crossing required balance and composure; every climb reinforced the principles of patience, courage, adaptability, and self-control. These are the same timeless qualities cultivated through Taekwondo and refined through years of adventure in the Himalayas.

Looking back, this specialised course became the final and most important stage of preparation before attempting Mount Hanuman Tibba. It transformed an experienced group of climbers into a cohesive expedition team, fully prepared to face one of the most challenging peaks in the Indian Himalayas. The lessons learned at ABVIMAS would soon be tested on the steep glaciers, exposed ridges, and unpredictable weather of Hanuman Tibba, where technical skill, teamwork, and mental resilience would determine the success of the expedition.



Chapter XVII

2008 | Mount Patashu Peak (15,500 ft)



Mount Patalsu Peak Expedition (2008)

The Final Preparatory Climb Before Mount Hanuman Tibba

"Training develops skill, but a mountain reveals whether that skill has truly become instinct."

The year **2008** marked another significant milestone in my Himalayan mountaineering journey when I participated in the **Mount Patalsu Peak Expedition** as part of the **Advance Mountaineering Refresher Course** conducted by the **Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS)**, Manali, under the sponsorship of the **Indian Air Force Adventure Cell**. This expedition was not merely a routine climb; it served as the **final practical assessment and pre-expedition preparation** before our team undertook the technically demanding ascent of **Mount Hanuman Tibba**.

Standing at an altitude of approximately **15,500 feet (4,700 metres)**, **Mount Patalsu Peak** is situated above the picturesque **Solang Valley** near Manali in Himachal Pradesh. Although considered a moderate Himalayan peak, its steep ascents, rocky ridges, snow slopes, changing weather, and high-altitude environment make it an ideal training mountain for advanced mountaineering courses. For decades,

ABVIMAS has utilised Patalsu Peak to evaluate the physical fitness, technical competence, and mental preparedness of mountaineers before they progress to more challenging Himalayan expeditions.

The approach to Patalsu Peak traverses dense deodar forests, alpine grasslands, rocky mountain trails, glacial streams, and snow-covered slopes. As the climb gains altitude, the terrain becomes increasingly demanding, requiring participants to apply advanced mountaineering techniques under realistic expedition conditions. The summit offers breathtaking panoramic views of the **Pir Panjal Range, Hanuman Tibba, Friendship Peak, Shitidhar Peak**, and numerous surrounding Himalayan summits, providing both inspiration and a reminder of the greater challenges that lie ahead.

Unlike classroom instruction or controlled practice areas, the climb to Patalsu Peak places every trainee in a genuine mountain environment where theoretical knowledge must be translated into practical action. Throughout the ascent, participants demonstrate proficiency in mountain movement, route selection, rope discipline, snow craft, ice craft, navigation, and safe climbing techniques while carrying expedition loads under high-altitude conditions.

The primary objective of the expedition was to evaluate the readiness of every member selected for the forthcoming **Mount Hanuman Tibba Expedition**. The climb assessed endurance, acclimatisation, teamwork, leadership, decision-making, and the ability to remain composed under physical and environmental stress. Every section of the route demanded disciplined movement, efficient energy management, situational awareness, and complete trust among team members.

For me, this expedition represented the perfect integration of my experiences as an **Indian Air Force Air Warrior**, a **Taekwondo practitioner**, and an experienced Himalayan mountaineer. Years of military training had instilled discipline and leadership; martial arts had developed balance, coordination, concentration, and controlled breathing; previous Himalayan expeditions had cultivated endurance and resilience. On the slopes of Mount Patalsu, these qualities merged naturally into a unified approach to mountaineering. The climb also reinforced an important lesson that I had gradually learned throughout my journey in the mountains—that successful expeditions are built upon preparation rather than ambition. Every careful step, every rope technique, every breathing cycle, and every decision contributed to developing the confidence required for more technical climbs. Mount Patalsu became the bridge between advanced training and expedition leadership.

Under the guidance of the highly experienced instructors of **ABVIMAS** and the disciplined leadership of the **Indian Air Force Adventure Cell**, the expedition provided invaluable practical experience that prepared us both physically and mentally for the formidable challenge of **Mount Hanuman Tibba**. It reaffirmed that technical proficiency alone is insufficient in the Himalayas; success depends equally upon patience, teamwork, humility, adaptability, and respect for the mountain environment.

Looking back, the **Mount Patalsu Peak Expedition** was much more than a training climb. It was the final examination before one of the most demanding expeditions of my mountaineering career. The lessons learned on its slopes became an essential part of my philosophy of **Mountain Martial Arts**, where technical excellence, disciplined preparation, and harmony with nature form the foundation of every successful adventure. Standing on the summit of Patalsu, I knew that we were no longer merely trainees—we were an expedition team, ready to face the greater challenge that awaited us on the towering glaciers of **Mount Hanuman Tibba**.



Chapter XVIII

2008 | Mount Hanuman Tibba (19,500 ft)

- **Range:** Himalayas.
- **Flagged Off By:** Director, Adventure Cell, Indian Air Force.
- **Climate:** Technical ice climbing and severe alpine conditions.
- **Internal Practice:** Summit Demonstration, synthesizing a decade of Taekwondo, Tummo, and Lung-gom into a single act of martial transcendence.



Mount Hanuman Tibba Expedition (2008) Successfully Summited with the Indian Air Force Adventure Cell (19,500 ft)

"A summit is not reached in a single day. It is earned through years of discipline, preparation, sacrifice, and unwavering determination."

The year 2008 marked the pinnacle of my Himalayan mountaineering journey when I had the honour of successfully summiting Mount Hanuman Tibba (19,500 ft / 5,928 m) as a member of the Indian Air Force Adventure Cell Expedition. This expedition represented the culmination of nearly a decade of continuous training, Himalayan expeditions, military discipline, and martial arts practice that had begun in 1998. Every mountain I had climbed, every jungle I had crossed, every desert I had traversed, and every lesson learned through the Indian Air Force, Taekwondo, and mountaineering ultimately converged on the icy slopes of Hanuman Tibba.

Situated in the Pir Panjal Range of the Kullu Valley, Himachal Pradesh, Mount Hanuman Tibba is one of the most technically demanding peaks in the region. Rising majestically above the Solang Valley, it is recognised among Indian mountaineers as a serious alpine objective requiring advanced technical climbing skills, excellent physical conditioning, and sound judgment. Unlike trekking peaks, Hanuman Tibba demands proficiency in glacier travel, steep snow climbing, ice craft, rope techniques, crevasse negotiation, and high-altitude expedition management.

The mountain is guarded by massive glaciers, heavily crevassed snowfields, steep ice slopes, unstable moraine, exposed ridgelines, and constantly changing weather. Climbers face freezing temperatures,

powerful mountain winds, hidden crevasses, avalanche-prone slopes, and rapidly deteriorating weather conditions that demand absolute concentration and disciplined teamwork. Every step requires precision, and every decision can influence the safety of the entire expedition.

Before attempting Hanuman Tibba, our team underwent an intensive Advance Mountaineering Refresher Course at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports (ABVIMAS), Manali, where we refined our technical skills under the guidance of experienced instructors. The ascent of Mount Patalsu Peak formed the final practical assessment, ensuring that every member was fully prepared for the greater challenge ahead. This systematic preparation reflected the professional planning and operational excellence of the Indian Air Force Adventure Cell, where no expedition begins without rigorous training and meticulous attention to safety.

The expedition team comprised sixteen carefully selected Air Warriors, each trained to operate in the demanding Himalayan environment. After establishing camps, negotiating heavily crevassed glaciers, traversing steep snow slopes, and overcoming the technical challenges posed by Hanuman Tibba, the summit attempt was launched under favourable weather conditions.

On 7 June 2008, the expedition achieved a remarkable success when 12 of the 16 expedition members successfully reached the summit of Mount Hanuman Tibba (19,500 ft). I was proud to be among the successful summit team. The achievement reflected not only individual determination but also the outstanding leadership, meticulous planning, technical competence, and teamwork demonstrated throughout the expedition. Every successful summit represented months of preparation, intensive military training, advanced mountaineering instruction, and complete trust among teammates.

For me, climbing Hanuman Tibba represented much more than reaching another Himalayan summit. It symbolised the successful integration of my life's three greatest disciplines—military service, martial arts, and mountaineering. The leadership and discipline instilled by the Indian Air Force, the balance and mental focus cultivated through Taekwondo, and the endurance developed through years of Himalayan expeditions combined seamlessly during the climb. Every movement on the glacier required controlled breathing, calm decision-making, efficient energy management, and complete trust in my fellow climbers.

Years of practising yoga, meditation, and martial arts breathing techniques proved invaluable during the expedition. Maintaining a steady rhythm of breath, conserving energy, and remaining mentally composed under extreme physical stress allowed me to climb efficiently in the oxygen-deficient environment. The mountain reinforced my conviction that true strength lies not merely in physical power but in the harmonious integration of body, mind, breath, and spirit.

Standing atop Mount Hanuman Tibba, surrounded by the majestic peaks of the Pir Panjal Range, I experienced one of the proudest moments of my mountaineering career. The summit was not simply a personal accomplishment; it was the successful culmination of a professionally executed Indian Air Force Adventure Cell Expedition, demonstrating the highest standards of military training, expedition planning, and mountaineering excellence.

Looking back today, the Mount Hanuman Tibba Expedition stands as one of the defining achievements of my career as an Indian Air Force Air Warrior, mountaineer, and martial artist. It was not merely the successful ascent of a Himalayan peak but the culmination of a decade-long journey dedicated to exploring the limitless potential of the human body and mind through the combined disciplines of military service, mountaineering, and martial arts.

For me, Hanuman Tibba was never merely a mountain to be conquered. It became the summit where ten years of dedication found their true meaning, reaffirming my lifelong belief that the greatest victory is not over the mountain, but over one's own limitations.



Chapter XIX

Selected to Climb Mount Everest from Indian Air Force

The Everest That Remained a Dream

"Not every mountain we fail to climb is a defeat. Sometimes, the greatest victory lies in the sacrifice we make before the climb even begins."

Mount Everest has always symbolized the ultimate dream of every mountaineer. Standing at 8,848 metres above sea level, it is not merely the highest peak on Earth—it is a test of human endurance, courage, discipline, and determination. Like countless climbers, I too nurtured the dream of one day standing on its summit with the Indian Tricolour fluttering proudly in my hands.

After years of dedicated military service, intensive mountaineering training, successful Himalayan expeditions, and unwavering commitment to adventure sports, I was honoured to be selected by the Indian Air Force as a prospective member for the Mount Everest Expedition. For me, it was one of the proudest moments of my life. It represented the culmination of years of sacrifice, hard work, and preparation.

The pre-expedition training camp commenced at the Directorate of Adventure Cell, New Delhi. Every day of preparation was critical. The Everest expedition demanded exceptional physical fitness, technical excellence, mental resilience, and complete commitment. Every participant knew that even a single missed day of training could make the difference between selection and rejection.

I reported to the camp filled with enthusiasm, determination, and gratitude. At last, the dream that had lived within me for years seemed within reach.

Then destiny intervened. While undergoing training, I received distressing news from Air Force Station Nal, Rajasthan. My wife, who was staying there alone, had fallen seriously ill. The message shook me deeply. As a husband, I felt an overwhelming responsibility to be by her side during her illness.

With humility and respect, I approached the Director of Adventure Cell, **Wing Commander Tripathy**, and requested a short period of leave. I explained my family circumstances and assured him that I would return immediately to continue my Everest preparation.

Unfortunately, my request was declined. During our interaction, I felt that my humble appeal was dismissed without consideration for the seriousness of my family situation. I was informed that no leave could be granted during the Everest preparation camp. I was given only two choices—remain in the camp and continue with the Everest training, or accept a movement order to Air Force Station Nal. If I chose to leave, I would automatically forfeit my place in the Mount Everest expedition.

It was one of the most difficult decisions of my life. On one side stood Mount Everest—the dream I had pursued through years of relentless training, countless hours of preparation, and numerous Himalayan expeditions. On the other side stood my wife—alone, seriously ill, and in need of my presence.

For a soldier, duty to the nation is supreme. But duty towards one's family is equally sacred. I spent many anxious moments wrestling with my conscience. My heart longed to remain in the Everest camp, but my sense of responsibility called me elsewhere.

Finally, I made my decision. With a heavy heart, I accepted the movement order, saluted, and walked out of the Directorate of Adventure Cell in New Delhi.

As I crossed the gates of the camp, I knew I was not merely leaving a training establishment.

I was walking away from my opportunity to climb Mount Everest. It was perhaps the greatest disappointment of my mountaineering career. For many years afterwards, I often asked myself a silent question:

"What if I had stayed?"

Would I have stood on the roof of the world? Would my name have been among those who conquered Everest? No one can answer those questions today. Time moved on, but the memory never faded. Yet, with the wisdom that comes through experience, I gradually realised something far more important. Success is not measured only by the mountains we conquer. It is equally measured by the responsibilities we choose to honour.

**The Indian Air Force taught me discipline.
Mountaineering taught me courage.
Life taught me compassion.**

That day I did not reach the highest mountain on Earth, but I remained true to the values that had shaped my life.

I chose my family over personal glory. Looking back today, I carry no bitterness. Every organisation has its own rules, responsibilities, and operational requirements, and every commander must make decisions based on his understanding of those responsibilities. My disappointment arose from the circumstances and the difficult choice I was compelled to make—not from the dream itself.

Although I lost the opportunity to climb Mount Everest, I never allowed that disappointment to define my future. Instead, I continued my journey with renewed determination.

**I climbed many more Himalayan peaks.
I represented India in international competitions.
I trained thousands of youth in martial arts and adventure sports.
I served my nation with pride.
I devoted my life to building stronger citizens through discipline,
patriotism, and physical excellence.**

Perhaps God had written a different destiny for me. Everest remained unconquered in my life, but countless other summits awaited me—not only in the mountains, but also in the lives of the thousands of students, soldiers, athletes, and young people whom I have had the privilege to guide.

Today, when I look back on that chapter of my life, I do not remember only the mountain I could not climb.

**I remember the values I refused to compromise.
Some dreams remain unfinished.
Some sacrifices become greater than achievements.
I may not have stood on the summit of Mount Everest, but I stood firmly by my principles.
And in the journey of life, I believe that is an even higher summit.**

Yet, one dream has never faded.

The dream of standing on the summit of Mount Everest still burns within me. Age has never been a limitation in my life. It has only strengthened my resolve. Every mountain I have climbed, every student I have trained, every challenge I have overcome, and every honour I have earned has prepared me for an even greater purpose.

My dream is still alive.

God willing, I will climb Mount Everest before I turn sixty.

When that day comes, it will not merely be the fulfilment of a mountaineer's dream. It will be the completion of a journey that began decades ago—a journey interrupted by duty, strengthened by sacrifice, and sustained by unwavering determination.

The summit of Everest is no longer just a mountain to me.

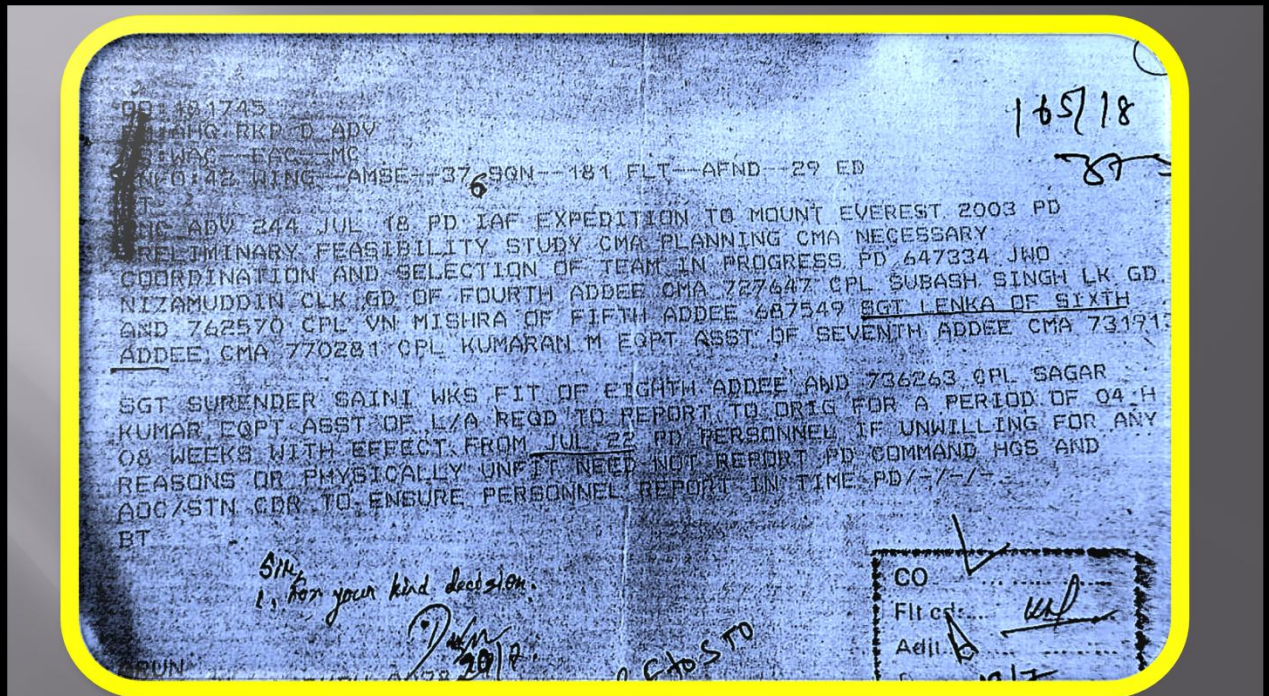
It is a promise I have made to myself.

And until I stand upon its highest point with the National Flag of India flying proudly in my hands, my journey will remain unfinished.

Mountains can wait. Duty cannot. But dreams never die.

Mountains can wait. Duty cannot.

IAF MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION CAMP



I ATTENDED THE 1ST MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION CAMP BUT DUE TO ILL HEALTH MY WIFE I WAS TO LEAVE THE CAMP. SO MISSED TO

PARTICIPATE IN THE ABOVE IAF EXPEDITION

Chapter XX

End Note : Nomination for the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award (2003)

The successful ascent of **Mount Sthitidhar (5,370 metres)** and my sustained contributions to adventure sports, mountaineering, martial arts, and youth training did not go unnoticed within the Indian Air Force. My participation in numerous national expeditions, coupled with my dedication to promoting adventure activities among Air Warriors and their families, led to one of the proudest recognitions of my military career.

In 2003, I was **officially nominated by the Indian Air Force for the prestigious Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award** in the category of **Land Adventure**—India's highest civilian honour for excellence in adventure sports. The nomination was based not only on my mountaineering achievements but also on my overall contribution to adventure training and leadership. By then, I had successfully participated in and led expeditions across diverse terrains, including the **Western Ghats, the Thar Desert, the Himalayas, Mount Rudugaira (19,125 ft), Mount Sthitidhar (17,600+ ft), Mount Bhagirathi-II Advance Base Camp (19,500 ft), and Mount Nanda Ghunti Advance Base Camp (18,000 ft)**. My responsibilities often extended beyond climbing, serving as **Group Leader, Expedition Videographer, Photographer, Instructor, and Team Mentor**.

The nomination dossier highlighted my achievements in **Taekwondo and Kenbudo**, my qualifications as a **National Referee, National Instructor, and Black Belt**, and my years of teaching martial arts to Air Force personnel, Quick Reaction Teams, Officer Cadets, airmen, civilians, and their families across various Air Force Stations. It also acknowledged my contribution as an **Adventure Videographer and Photographer**, documenting numerous expeditions for training and historical records.

One of the most meaningful parts of the nomination was the assessment written by my Commanding Officer, who observed:

"Sergeant Lenka has an outstanding record and a keen participation in adventure activities organised by the Indian Air Force and civil authorities. He has achieved high standards of fitness through his outdoor activities. Apart from climbing peaks in normal duty, he has voluntarily undertaken numerous expeditions. He is a disciplined soldier, keen sportsman, adventure lover and motivator. Sergeant Lenka is strongly recommended for the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award in the field of Land Adventures."

Those words meant more to me than any medal. They reflected years of perseverance, discipline, and selfless service. Although I was honoured to receive this prestigious nomination, the experience itself reinforced an important lesson: **recognition is never the destination—it is only a milestone**. Every expedition, every summit, every training camp, and every life inspired through adventure had already become my greatest reward.

Looking back today, I consider this nomination not merely as a personal achievement but as recognition of every mentor who guided me, every teammate who trusted me, every soldier who trained beside me, and every mountain that taught me humility. The nomination strengthened my conviction that adventure is not merely about conquering peaks; it is about conquering fear, building character, inspiring others, and serving the nation with courage.

The journey continues.

The mountains are still calling, and my greatest dream—to stand on the summit of Mount Everest with the Indian Tricolour—remains alive.

NOMINATION FOR TENZING NORGAY NATIONAL ADVENTURE AWARD-2003

NOMINATION FOR TENZING NORGAY NATIONAL ADVENTURE AWARD-2003

687549-A
SGT
ASHOK KUMAR LENKA
37 SQUADRON AIRFORCE
C/O 56 APO

37S1121/IPS

31 Oct 03

HQ SWAC, IAF
Gandhi Nagar-09

TENZING NORGAY NATIONAL ADVENTURE AWARDS 687549-A SGT LENKA AK ELLECT FIT

- Reference is made to your Headquarters signal No ADV/47 dated 23 Oct 03.
- Enclosed please find the nomination form filled in all respect along with the supporting documentary proof in respect of the above mentioned SNCO for above national award as desired vide your HQ signal ibid.

Encl: As stated



(VS Charan)
Ft Lt
Adj
for CO

TENZING NORGAY NATIONAL ADVENTURE AWARDS NOMINATION FOR LAND BASED ADVENTURE

A NAME ASHOK KUMAR LENKA
B SEX MALE
C FATHERS NAME SRI BHASKAR CHANDRA LENKA
D DATE OF BIRTH 23 JUNE 1968
E ADDRESS 37 SQN AF C/O 56 APO
F OCCUPATION SERVICE IN IAF
G EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS BA
H DETAILS OF ACHIEVEMENT

(i) Mountaineering

Expedition	Flag Off By	Institution	Duration	Designation	DUTY/LEAVE	Achievement
Mount Bhagirathi I Height: 22,624 ft	Union Sports Minister Mr. Mahul Wazir & Director MS Ramaiah Institute of Technology Mr MR. Saram	Adventure Sports Association of India	27 Sep-15 Oct 99	Group Leader Incharge Video, Photography & Food	On permission of IAF (Civil TTD) Vide Air HQ/RKP ADV01 dtd 18 Aug 99	Climbed upto Advance Base Camp (19, 500ft). Team returned back due to adverse weather condition.
Sithidhara Peak Height: 19, 000 ft	Air Mah. JS Rai. ADC- in-C Trg Command, Her Highness Mrs VS Ramadevi Governor of Karnataka & Union Sports Minister Mr. Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa	.	16 Aug-02 Sep 2000	.	On permission of IAF (Civil TTD) Vide Air HQ/RKP/294 dtd 26 Jul 2000 & ADV01 dtd 28 Jul 2000	Summited the Peak Sithidhara (19, 000 ft)
Mount Rudugara Height: 19, 125 ft	Union Defence Minister Mr. George Fernandez.	.	02 Sep-25 Sep 01	.	On permission of IAF (Civil TTD) Vide Air HQ/RKP ADV032 dtd 22 Aug 2001	Summited the Peak (19, 125 ft)
Mount Nanda Ghunti (21, 300 ft) & Panti Bade	Lok Sabha Speaker Mr. Shriy Pail Bade	.	25 Aug-20 Sep 02	.	On Leave	Climbed upto ABC of (19, 00 ft) Thereafter team returned back due adverse weat condition.

NOINATION FOR TENZING NORGAY NATIONAL ADVENTURE AWARD-2003

(K) Trekking

Expedition	Institution	Year	Dir	Designation	DUTY LEAVE	Achievements
Himalayan						
Siria Pass	ASAI	1998	15 Days	Group Leader Incharge Video & Photography	On Leave	Siria Pass 15,500 ft, 125 KM
Wild Life						
Western Ghats	ASAI	1997	07 Days	Group Leader	On Leave	Sumited Peak Kudremukh, 100 Km
Western Ghats	ASAI	1998	-	-	On Leave	-
Desert						
Thar Desert	ASAI	2002	02 days	Expedition Leader	On Leave	80 KM

J. RECEIVED ANY AWARDS: NIL

K. INDIVIDUALS REPUTATION IN THE LOCALITY OF RESIDENCE: As a mountaineer and martial artist he spreads a sense of adventure among his fellow brothers and inspires the locality to maintain the best physical fitness to achieve 'sound mind in a sound body'. He is a role model in his locality and home town in Orissa.

L. WHETHER CONVICTED BY COURT: NO

M. JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

(a) The individual has achieved and maintained these rare fitness traits all date apart from performing his normal service duties in an exemplary manner in IAF. He has never been out of his work place for achieving these high standards in the field of adventure except during his camps and expeditions. He accredits his achievements to the various commanders of IAF.

(b) The individual has an inherent taste of adventure as it is apparent from records of his achievements. He has taken part in several expeditions during his leave period and at his own expense.

(c) Adventure mixed with an ounce of martial arts discipline is an every day's routine for the individual. He conducts fortnightly nature treks, rock climbing and cycling expedition for his followers at his duty station.

(d) Climbing mountain is difficult but performing martial arts at different heights of Himalayas with the partial presence of oxygen and temperature as low as -10 deg C is nerve thrilling. According to him his practice is attributed 'To know and develop internal energies (Ki) and develop eclectic element of martial arts (TSUNO & LUNGUM). The entire process is to achieve "Vajrakaya" (the supreme body) "Vajramedha" (the supreme mind). He follows the foot steps of father of martial arts and eldest disciple of Lord Buddha Guru Bodhidharma'.

ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION'S FOR THE PROPOSAL

(i) Sports Qualification:

Sl No	Qualification	Federation	Year of Starting	Year of Passing	Style
Martial Art					
Style : Taekwondo (WTF) & Kenbudo (ZTKA)					
1.	1st Dan Black Belt	TFI, India	1989	1996	Taekwondo
2.	1ind Dan Black Belt	ZTKA, India	1996	1998	Kenbudo (Weapon)
3.	Zen National Referee	ZTKA, India	-	1999	Taekwondo & Kenbudo
4.	Zen National Instructor	ZTKA, India	-	2002	Taekwondo & Kenbudo
Adventure					
Rock Climbing & Mountaineering					
1.	Basic Rock Climbing Course	HQ TRAINING COMMAND, IAF (ASAI, Bangalore)	24 Mar	10 Apr 2000	-

(ii) Martial Arts Teaching Experience: Total No. Years: 14 Yrs, Style: Taekwondo & Kenbudo (Unarmed Combat & Traditional Weapon)

Sl No	Place	Authority	Year of Starting	Year of Closing	To Whom Imparted
1.	AFS Adampur	IAF	1990	1996	IAF Personnel, their Families & Civilians
2.	AFS Awanitpur	IAF	1996	1998	Quick Reaction Team (QRT), IAF Personnel & their Families
3.	Air Force Technical College	IAF	1998	2001	Officers' Cadet
4.	Communication Training Institute	IAF	1999	2001	Airmen Trainee
5.	Jalahalli East	Civil	1998	2001	Civilians, IAF Personnel & their families
6.	AFS Nal	IAF	2001	2003	IAF Personnel & their families
7.	AFS Bhuj	IAF	2003	Till Date	IAF Personnel & their families

(iii) A trained Cinematographer & Editor from Audio Visual Production Unit CIO Air Force Technical College, he was part of Film crew on production for more than 25 Films produced by AVPU on U-matic and Digital video editing console. With this experience and interest he was made in charge for Video & Photo team in all above expeditions mentioned in para H. The best films made by him were on Mount Bhadrachal & Siria Pass high altitude expeditions. He is an asset for adventure videography and editing.

P. OVERALL ASSESSMENT:

The performance of Sgt Lanka AK has been excellent in performance of his primary duty and other duties entrusted to him in the interest of service. With his good organising and motivating capabilities, he exhibits rare leadership qualities. Apart from being a keen sportsman and fitness freak he has a great sense of adventure discipline which is amply evident from his participation and performance in an array of adventure activities over a period of time.

Q. REMARKS OF COMMANDING OFFICER:

Sergeant Lanka AK is an outstanding sportsman and a keen participant in adventure activities organised by the IAF and the civil authorities. He is an instructor in the Martial Arts and has achieved high standards of fitness through his outdoor activities. Apart from carrying out his normal duty in an exemplary manner he has motivated people around him to achieve high standards of physical fitness. Also through his classes in Martial Arts he has been instrumental in teaching the art of Self Defence to all age groups thereby increasing self confidence among people around him. With a large number of followers in the peer group he exhibits rare leadership qualities which are the need of the hour today. As a disciplined soldier, keen sportsman, adventure lover and motivator in true sense Sgt Lanka AK is strongly recommended for "Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award" in field of Land Adventures.

Date: Oct 03

(Vishwas Gaur)
Wing Commander
Commanding Officer
No. 37 Sqn AF

(Anil Kumar)
Wing Commander
Commanding Officer
37 Squadron Air Force

UNC ADV/341 JUN17 PD ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES 2008 PD IAF MOUNTAINEERING EXPEDITION TO MOUNT HANUMAN TIBBA (5983 M) DURING MAY-JUN 2008 PD ORIG ADV/265 CMAADV/266 AND ADV/267 MAY/08 REFERS PD IAF HAS ACHIEVED RECORD SUCCESS BY PUTTING TWELVE AIR WARRIORS ON THE TOP OF MOUNT HANUMAN TIBBA PD FOLLOWING AIR WARRIORS SUCCESSFULLY SCALED MOUNT HANUMAN TIBBA (5983M) ON JUN/07 AT 1120 H PD SQN LDR N RAWAT (24632-G) ADMATC OF ORIG PD SQN LDR R SAGAR (26746-T) F(N) OF SEVENTH ADDEE PD SQN LDR GP KUMAR (26124-K) OF EIGHTH ADDEE PD FLT LT JK NISHANT (28767-F) ADMATC OF NINTH ADDEE PD 647334-B WO MIZAMUDDIN CLK GD OF TENTH ADDEE PD 717458-K JWO N KUMAR INST FIT OF ELEVENTH ADDEE PD 727844-K JWO NR CHOUDHARY VM CLK GD OF TWELFTH ADDEE PD 687649-A JWO AK LENKA ELECT FIT OF THIRTEENTH ADDEE PD 724191-L CPL VIJAY YADAV MTD OF FOURTEENTH ADDEE PD 786556-B CPL ASHWANI KUMAR AFSO OF FIFTEENTH ADDEE PD 900808-S CPL KR VINOTH IAF(P) OF SIXTEENTH ADDEE AND 798321-B LAC DK VAYAS PHOTO FIT OF LAST ADDEE PD AIR WARRIORS TO BE FELICITATED APPROPRIATELY IN BEFITTING MANNER PD COMMANDS AND UNITS TO GIVE WIDE PUBLICITY THROUGH SRO/URD/NOTICE BOARD PD/.

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Chapter XXI

THE END

The Journey Continues...

A mountain is never conquered. It merely allows a climber to stand upon its summit for a few precious moments.

Every peak I have climbed has taught me humility.
Every challenge has made me stronger.
Every failure has become a lesson.
Every success has become a responsibility.

From the humble villages of Odisha...
to the parade grounds of the Indian Air Force...
from martial arts dojos to international championships...
from the deserts of Rajasthan to the glaciers of the Himalayas...

My journey has never been about collecting medals.

It has always been about building character, serving the nation, inspiring the next generation, and proving that discipline, courage, and perseverance can overcome any obstacle.

I have been blessed to wear the uniform of the Indian Air Force.
I have been blessed to teach thousands of students.
I have been blessed to represent India.
I have been blessed to stand on Himalayan summits.

Yet, one dream still shines brightly before me...

Mount Everest.

That dream is alive.

God willing, before I complete sixty years of age, I shall stand on the highest point on Earth carrying the Tiranga with pride.

When that day comes, it will not be the end of my journey.

It will simply be another beginning.

Because a warrior never stops climbing.

He simply chooses the next mountain.

"Life is not measured by the number of years we live, but by the number of lives we inspire."

"Mountains can wait. Duty cannot. But dreams never die."

Message to Every Reader

If this book inspires even one child to dream bigger...
one youth to serve the nation...
one parent to encourage their child...
one soldier to keep faith...
or one person to rise again after failure...

then every step of my journey has been worthwhile.

Never surrender your dreams.

Never compromise your character.

Never stop learning.

Never stop serving.

And above all...

Never stop climbing.

With Gratitude

Master Dr. Ashok Kumar Lenka

The Mountain Warrior

Founder – Hawrang Academy

National Secretary – Veterans India Sports Wing

International Taekwondo Master • Mountaineer • Adventure Leader • Patriot • Teacher

"The summit is not the destination... it is the beginning of a greater responsibility."

THE END