

Ama Dablam. 2005 report

The Ama Dablam 6812 m is in Sagarmata National Park of Nepal, in the heart of the Himalayas and is eight kilometers as the crow flies from Everest. The mountain is an imposing appearance, and fall on once the Dudh Kosi valley to Namche Bazar moves from upstream. The name Ama Dablam is from the Sherpa language, and means "the necklace of the mother," and that because of the hanging glaciers in its summit flank. The Ama Dablam has become the symbol of Sagarmata National Park and is considered one of the most beautiful mountains in the world. Be the first ascent in 1961, the Ama Dablam has often been climbed, and has become in recent years become a popular destination for high-altitude climbers. On the normal route we chose, one has to deal with around 2,160 high meters from the base camp to the summit. Of these, approximately 1300 high meters of altitude in mixed terrain of rock to Difficulty 5.5; Snow and ice cream to commit to 70 ° slope. These are the facts of Ama Dablam ascent.

I decided to participate with the American Expeditionary provider Summit Climb, Manager Daniel Mazur, since I had made two years ago with him on Pumo Ri good experience. At the Expedition 18 participants from eight countries involved (6 Americans, 2 British, 1 Canadian, 2 Israeli, 2 Romanian, 2 Finns, 2 Australians and I was the only German).

On 01 October, the majority of participants find in Kathmandu in Hotel Nepa International. The next day, a brief introduction will take place and the recent purchases are made.

At 3:10. then we have the flight to Lukla. Short of the runway in Lukla a cloud moves in front. The pilot must turn the aircraft in the last minute of the runway still missing, because he can only land on sight. With a steep maneuver up and to the left, he turns off the small plane with 16 people on board in the valley. With a second tight corner he tried to fly out of the narrow valley. It looked as if he would like to demonstrate a rollercoaster ride with us aboard an aerobatic. After a major curve outside the valley he found a window in the clouds. It goes down steeply. We see the runway. So then succeeded on the second attempt the landing. With a rest day in Namche Bazaar we are five days on the road to the base camp of Ama Dablam.

07:10. In the village Pangpoche we still obtained after a puja the blessings of a Buddhist lamas for the success of the expedition. After lunch we descend to the base camp (4650 m), where we have a private tent on a gentian meadow under the Ama Dablam. The next day at base camp (BL) is made the obligatory introduction to the climbing techniques and the operation of the Certeg- hyperbaric bag to rescue height sick.

In the next ten days we will gradually advance base camp (ABC) and the stock one (C1) and two (C2) and visit us again and again arrive at a rest day with good food at base camp (BC). On the second day already go to the first acclimatization to the advance base camp (ABC) 5350 m. I feel good and go with. The road is long and leads through several moraine on the western degree of Ama Dablam. About three high camps leads the ascent route on the West degrees to the summit. In the ABC Sherpas have already set up tents and a kitchen tent. We drink hot lemonade and go after a short rest back into BC. To conserve my strength, I give my bivouac equipment for the high camps Sherpa Lakpha to high wear. To date, the summit of Ama Dablam was mostly hidden by monsoon clouds, but today on October 10, the morning sun shines in a cloudless sky. The Sherpas are preparing here in BC a puja

before they attend all members. There are a lot of pastries, fruit and drinks. The riser material, pick, crampons, ropes are consecrated by Lama priest.

The second climb we stay in ABC and rise the next day over boulders and an inclined at 45 ° to the rock slab bearing C1 to 5700 m altitude. The road runs along the south side of the west ridge and is almost entirely free from snow. The tents of several expeditions are distributed on the south side below the west ridge. The kitchen tent from ABC was moved because of lack of snow for water. We only take a small snack and drink hot tea from the kitchen tent before we descend to the BC. I think the rest day provided a strict and will not let it affect me from the summit fever. Only two participants have given up and in the next few days there will be a third party. Also suffer some indigestion and altitude sickness because they are too quickly ascended to the higher camp. Two participants even have to stay for three days after Pangpoche to recover. Again and again I was asked about the necessary condition for such an expedition. Not only the physical condition but also a good acclimatization and their own experience in high altitude mountaineering are key factors for a successful summit. The consciousness (experience) is the best equipment a height climber. My head for heights, I tested before the expedition in the Alps and the Black Forest. On two consecutive weekends, I boarded without further acclimatization alone the Weißmies and Nadelhorn. The day with the greatest physical strain I had in a pub and not on an expedition. But only the routine decisions in all situations leads to success on the mountain.

The Sherpas have now set the fixed ropes to C3. From the C3 route runs to the summit still only in ice up to 65 ° but there are no technical difficulties more.

A Japanese team draws today from disappointed. One participant was able to reach the summit. The successful Russians evacuate the camp already.

Finally came the summit day for us. We had now joined forces us into three teams. The other two teams were not descended from the last Akklimatisationsetappe of L1 in the base camp, so as to save time and energy to their liking. A tactical consideration, followed the most top climbers. However, it is a matter of opinion whether this is the better solution for recreation. I decided to descend BC, for a particular cloud formation in the sky said to me for the next few days of bad weather ahead. A good meal in the BC and a meticulous preparation for the summit day strengthened my resolve. The bad weather also came. In unfavorable, windy weather with little vision they had their summit bid. The same weather we had only the ascent from BC to C1. The night rushed through it in C1. On the morning were 15 cm fresh snow on the west ridge.

All other participants were distributed in the upper bearings and today some had their summit bid. In wind and fog that was no fun. I was glad to have decided two days before me for the descent, because I was hoping for good weather until we climb to the summit in another three days. The weather can only get better so yet. In C1 is square and each of us can relate a tent alone. The weather is bad. The Sherpas cook up late one warm meal for all. This is a significant advantage for the entire success. In the camps, two and three, we will have to cook ourselves.

21.10. (C1 - C2) will light I open the tent.. The sky is blue, the earth knows. Ten centimeters of fresh snow in this huge rock maze. Until now we had the time for acclimatization fully utilized, so that two reserve days were left for the summit attempt. In warm weather, the sun would soon melt the snow from the rock walls on our south side of West degree. Who today has the summit, can rejoice, for ten centimeters of fresh snow on the summit edge are more advantageous. After some waiting we choose for the climb to C2.

The route between C1 and C2 runs mainly on the south side of West degree and is thus defined by the intense radiant sun mostly free of snow. I climbed to C2 with normal trekking shoes, but I can imagine that stiff soles are in some rocky terrain with small treads advantageous for climbing. Ice ax and crampons we were not used to C2. The C2 is on a high rock tower, the horror tower are situated on the very close together five tents.

The path leads to only to about the same amount to a rise (about 20 m) in granitic rocks level of difficulty (LD) 2-3. Above is crossed and crossed a deep crack. The rope is not anchored in the crack and depends from one side to the other loose by. The traverse went on for another 15 m in the 4th SG. ascending and descending a rock next edge. After another 20 meters in easy climbing, you come to the foot of the Grey Tower (Gray Tower) 25 meters high, at the upper end of the most difficult 6 meters of climbing in the 5th - 6th LD are. There's a traffic jam. It will be pulled up with a free-hanging rope in a big bag backpacks. That takes time. Must we have a stop of 20 minutes. So far some point was tiring, but not exhaustive. At the foot of the wall was enough space for several people, so that you could get some dimensions unsecured move freely. It rose another highly of me. I could not watch, why they all needed in the upper part for a while. Only when I was his turn, I saw that in the upper part of the wall vertically and was pretty smooth. The fixed rope was anchored after about 15 meters high and followed up an inclined crack to the upper right. To avoid unintentionally and uncontrollably to commute from the crack, I commuted careful about 3 feet to the right by a direct climb to 15 meters higher lying state to have. Until then, the ascent went smoothly. From there I found only tiny handles and kicks, which offered no opportunity for holding my finger forces and capabilities. The rock was dismissive of the hands and feet. I tried to right, then dodge to the left, but in vain. Again, I had that connected with excessive force, apply unconventional method, and me on the rope using ascenders high pinch. Panting, I came up then to yet. After a breather I still climbed the short walk up to camp 2 at 6000 meters above sea level.

Five tents were in C2, on the summit of the Grey tower so close together that you had to climb over anchorages to come over. Five meters below the tents had the Sherpas another tent set up on a made-up platform on the edge of the abyss where I found shelter alone. For each tent was a cooking equipment with butane stove and pot. I cooked my instant soups and porridge with fruits of dry baby food and went to bed early.

22.10. (C2 - C3). In the morning I am as usual to six clock, cook tea for the road and a quick meal. We go to sixth, three participants and three sherpas towards C3. From here to C3 is mixed terrain, rock and ice. We must tighten our expedition shoes with crampons. First, the Grey Tower is bypassed to reach a firncool. Then you stand in front of a tall yellow rock structure at the tip of the Yellow Tower. In the lower area in a ice chute, climb high, then follow some altitude in mixed terrain up at a steep smooth rock face. Here about 30 m to traverse the rock (LD 4.) To the right. As you reach a rock wall with cracks (70 m height, (3rd - 5th LD) The rock wall is in the upper area into a humped ice degree. This ends steeply on the wall of the Yellow tower until yet I had no great difficulty, but at this rock wall you had to first on a narrow snow band and then the perpendicular, bare wall crossing. there was only one centimeter handles and kicks that were useless for my finger forces. crampons crunched on bare rock. I thought it was fixed rope taut in his left hand and crossed to a rock edge, behind which I could not find a useful handle for me. the backpack pulled me out of the wall and I go with the upper body in the rope while the legs with crampons on the wall braced. way I dressed the next hook. a tricky place much

sense and strength in the fingers Calls (5 LD.). Handle with gloves on his hands, everything is complicated anyway. Yet with a fixed rope, the entire route by at least two difficulty levels lowered. There is of course a huge difference whether you climb this route during installation of fixed ropes in advance or afterwards. I arrived on the other side. The others were ahead, while Sherpa Lakpha succeeded me. Here you switch from the south side of West degree on its steep north side, facing the BC. The crossing to the Yellow tower enters into the north face of Ama Dablam. From here, go down the first icecouloir the high strive with many others from the depths of the north side of the west ridge like organ pipes. The Icecouloir is about 40 m high and very steep at 70 °. It ends on a sharp ice degree that runs from the top of the Yellow tower like a cockscomb up in the middle of the Ama Dablam west wall. The ridge is airy and requires good concentration and balance, because both sides can be seen in yawning chasms. I can not think of what happens when a fall would follow through slipping. No! That just does not happen! While it remains four to five feet deep in a 70 ° steep slope hang on rope, but the shock and the energy expended are high come back enormously. The "rooster comb" led below the second hanging glacier in the Ama Dablam summit flank in a mushroom formation of ice, called the "mushroom". Just a few meters and you reach C3, on the platform of the second hanging glacier. The route of C2 after C3 is through their varied design a cocktail of physical challenge, intellectual concentration and an emotional earthquake. We arrive before noon in C3 to 6280 m. Another team of us is currently on the road at the top and not come back yet. Several of them still decide to stay until tomorrow in C3. It is closely that night. With two Sherpas I share the tent that night. Sherpa Lakpha cooks of my instant soups and cheese noodles, then a lot of tea. He has taken over the whole kitchen and I let him be happy. All night the tent walls flapping in the wind monotone. Middle of the night we wake up from a terrible crash. Like a flash it goes through my head. An ice avalanche! Is it the hanging glacier, "the necklace of mother" a hundred feet above us? It would just make sense to get out of the tent, because the avalanche would reach the tent in seconds. It is completely helpless. The roar of tons of heavy ice rushes somewhere beside past us into the depths of the west wall. That was all. I fall asleep again. The following year, 2006, the disaster happens. Five climbers are in stock 3 swept away by an avalanche with velvet tents.

23:10. (C3 - Summit - C3) At dawn Lakpha is already at making tea. It was a cold night. The tent walls are covered with ice from the inside. We eat all of my nut muesli and get ready. Until I get out of the tent and the shoes'm wearing, the fingers are frozen me. I suppose with only a couple energy bars and 1 ½ liters of tea. Lakpha urges the rise. The weather is excellent. Not a cloud to be seen. Before us the shady ice face of Ama Dablam- summit rises very steeply to the sky. We circumvent the right Serak (hanging glacier), also known as the jewelry box for the mother. Hands and feet will not give me warm even when climbing. If I gasp before shortness of breath, so I feel good when forces may continue to rise ten to fifteen meters in altitude over again. Above the jewelry box you have to climb over a glacier demolition. The summit flank is crossed by vertical firn couloire that look like white organ pipes in a church. Then it goes straight up in a gully. The sun is still not penetrated into the western flank to us and it is still very cold, but we also gain altitude quickly. From the group of rocks that rise straight from the little ice, leads a steeply rising ice ridge diagonally left up to the broad double peak of Ama Dablam. Hundred meters below the summit reached us yet but the sun. Two Sherpas and we three participants reached after 3.5 hours the summit of Ama Dablam. We congratulate each other. At the summit gave us a spectacular view. Far to the east towered above the third highest mountain in the world, the Kangendzönga (8586 m) in 80 km distance to the horizon. In the NE at 10 air miles of the great Makalu (8475

m), before the sharp degree of Baruntse a seven-thousand, to the north of Lhotse (8501 m) and Nuptse (7879 m) dominated by Mount Everest (8848 m) in 16 km distance. After NW to W a sea of seven-thousand dominated by Cho Oyu (8201). Five eight-thousanders and a sea of six and seven thousand meter is the view from the Ama Dablam. Twenty minutes later we were at the top, then we went off. Although enough time to descend to C2 was we stayed that night still in C3. Here we also had more space as in C2. Lakpha, the active Sherpa cooked for all. Also on this night the wind rattled incessantly on the tent walls. Changed maybe the weather? We have a good chance at good weather to descend the difficult route of C3 by C2, miss? The Verdict: Do not put off tomorrow what you can do today!

24.10. (C3 - BC) I slept well. The weather is crystal clear. After breakfast the tents will be canceled. The Sherpas have to haul their stuff next to the tents still down. Today we descend to the BC. In the evening all of our success and a birthday is celebrated. A bottle of rum making the rounds. There are pizza and a cake for Phil. From eighteen participants were fifteen successful at Ama Dablam. We partied till late, without the fatigue felt.

Why must the Ama Dablam be climbed? Malori, the English lost Everest climbers from 1921 would say, "Because it's there". From the perspective of the people west of the 21st century, he does not tolerate `white surface` on earth. Man faces ruler of his environment, he wants full control and make yourself available. The experiential, phenomenal world is for him to object of use, which he can manipulate at will. He struggles for power over his outside world and but loses power over his inner world, about themselves.

I asked Jack (USA) the loner in our group what it takes mountaineering. His answer: "When alone, I find peace." This is almost my intention, but also much more. The mountain is a field of activity for self-knowledge for me. Extreme life situations require short-term, yes spontaneous decisions for logical thinking with "ifs and buts" is too slow. The mountain is the yardstick for physical and spiritual qualities on the one hand, but also a school for self-knowledge and to overcome inertia, fear and ignorance. The climbing is an intensive form of true spiritual life. Early in life we have to learn to separate ourselves and let go of many respects. Of stressful things, to let go of sluggish habits stubborn mindsets and diehard emotions, means a kind of death that leads to new forms of life, new birth, eternal life. Life, I do not mean to vegetate, therefore means to die and be born again. By climbing you learn how little you need to live, if the total welfare Plunder stays away.

Ignorance is powerlessness. Knowledge is power, but only actualized knowledge is authority - power.

Erich Bonfert, Rheinfelden, 22.12.2005