

Feelings of the first Nepali Surveyor on top of Mount Everest

Khim Lal Gautam



We all have our own life to pursue, our own kind of dream to be weaving and we all have some power to make wishes come true, as long as we keep believing and when we achieve that dream there is a overwhelming feeling that is hard to explain. Mountain climbing was a passion I developed right from my childhood and to climb atop the highest mountain in the world at the young age of 27 was quite an achievement and the feeling is still hard to absorb. As a resident of Dhital, Kaski the first thing I saw when I opened my eyes every morning was the beautiful Macchapuchre and I always used to wonder what the feeling would it be to touch the surface of the Macchapuchre. So, as a kid I always wanted to reach the summit of Macchapuchre but climbing there was not permitted due to various reasons and my dream could not be materialized. But may be my fate had other ideas for me and I became the first government service holder and the first survey professional in Nepal to reach the summit of the highest mountain in the world.

The idea of climbing the Everest was mooted by Chief Secretary of Government of Nepal Madhav Ghimire as a initiative to promote tourism in nepal in the year 2063 B.S. and it was finally realised this year. A expedition team of 15 civil servants was chosen from a total of 600 government service holders out of which 9 were succesful in reaching the summit. I was the first person from the group to set my foot on the summit of the Everest. From the experience I found that the journey to the top of the world is a lot difficult and demands a lot of physical and mental strength than people might think. The world seen from the top of the world is stunning but as much as the beauty of the whole expedition, it is equally as dangerous. Nevertheless the mountain fascinates and draws people from all over the world to try their luck in scaling the highest mountain in the world. So, if necessary steps are taken and a proper plan is formulated and set in action mountain climbing can turn out to be a major source of employment for many Nepalese people and consequently will help the economy of Nepal.

When I left my home on the 24th of Chaitra, 2067 B.S. I didn't know if I would return my home safely so I bid farewell to my family and assured them that I would deceive death and succesfully climb the Everest and now here I am after my succesful journey to the top of the mountain , became the first government service holder and the first survey professional in Nepal to scale the Mt. Everest.

To climb the 3rd pole is perhaps more difficult than to climp the southern and northern poles. Many of the climbers don't even reach the "Khumbu Icefall". The death of Former

Minister of Foreign Affairs Sailendra Kumar Upadhyaya also took place there. Avalanches are of regular occurence in the mountains and one of the things that mountain climbers must be very aware of it. Most of the deaths in the mountain are due to these avalanaches.

Reaching the base camp was a wonderful feeling. Namche Pass is no less different than many business centres in the world. The place is full of different mountaineering agencies from different countries. Our goal there was not only to reach to the summit but also study the impact of the global environmental changes in the mountain as well as to see the condition of the waste management in the Everest area. As a Surveyor I also looked at the map of the area and got a lot of confusions in the tourist maps published by different agencies, as for example the height of the Kala Pathar where the Cabinet meeting was held was shown as 5542 m which is the height of its peak but not of the base and my GPS instrument showed the height of the base to be 5315m

As our journey continued some of members of our group suffered from nausea, altitude sickness but luckily I did not suffer from any major health problems .We reached the fourth camp ,at an altitude of 8000 metre on Jestha 3 at about 4 P.M. When we reached there our Sherpa suffered from some health problem and could not continue climbing with us. At that moment I too had a feeling that perhaps we could not continue our journey as well. The weather in the mountains is highly unpredictable and changes dramatically within hours. But still leaving behind fears and just focusing on what we were going to achieve we finally reached the South summit which is at an altitude of 8751 metres. The distance from the South summit to the top is known as the "Hillary step" and this climbing up to the top is the most challenging of the whole journey. Just 10 minutes of climbing was left when the oxygen in my cylinder was finished and I had to bear a high risk of staying without oxygen for 45 minutes in such a great altitude.

On 4 Jestha 2068 B.S. at 5:45 AM we finally reached the summit and I placed our national flag and the flag of Nepal Surveyors Association on the top of the world. Then gradually all the nine members of our group reached the top. We spent about 45 minutes at the summit. At that time I also released the musical album Atithi-2 of the world's youngest singer 3 years old Atithi Gautam. The temperature changes from minus 40 to 45 degree celcius in the matter of minutes. The wind speed at the top of the mountain was about 90 km/hr and it was almost impossible to stay at the summit as the day grows of.