



UAAA
Global Youth Summit 2004



Report of Mt Qizi Tibet Snow Mountaineering Expedition 2004

The University of Hong Kong, Institute of Human Performance, Adventure Education Programme



The flag of HKU was fluttering at the summit of Mt. Qizi at Tibet at 0630 and 0700 on 4 & 5 August 2004. 12 students of the University of Hong Kong and their instructors had struggled with an adverse situation for 10 days to reach up to 6206 metres height of the mountain at Tibet. It is remarkable record as we are the only mountaineering team of the Hong Kong universities and colleges that can climb up to this altitude.

With the support of the China Tibet Mountaineering Association and Tibet Mountaineering School, twelve of HKU mountaineering team members including 7 students and 5 instructors and doctor stood at the summit of Mt. Qizi. Mt. Qizi is located at North-west of Lhasa and laid on the ridge of Nyenchen Thanglha Range. This expedition was full of challenging and required the participants physical and mental fit to accomplish the mission. The students coped with Acute Mountain Sickness (AMS), severe mountain weather, unfamiliar environment and group dynamics. The objectives of this expedition are not only focused on the outdoor activity but also provide the room to the students for self discovery, self awareness and improvement through team performance and group discussion.



The team consists of 15 students of HKU, 5 officials and the doctor from HK and 7 mountain guides, the Cook and the instructors from Tibet Mountaineering School. Not surprisingly, all the students are no experience in the snow mountain and high altitude environment so the training workshops were held intensively in HK before the expedition. The training workshops

include the theory of Acute Mountain Sick (AMS), snow skills, trekking skills, use of ice axe and snow equipment, rope work and first aid.

With lower oxygen availability in higher altitude, everyone may suffer AMS. The symptoms include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, dizziness or confusion. AMS is a spectrum of illness, from mild to life-threatening. At the "severely ill" end of this spectrum is High Altitude Cerebral Edema; this is when the brain swells and ceases to function properly. Another form of severe altitude illness is High Altitude Pulmonary Edema that causes fluid in the lungs. Few of our team mates also suffered from AMS. Fortunately, the team mates recovered from AMS after the treatment of the team doctor. However, other than AMS, the team should encounter with the danger of crevasses, avalanche and snowstorm during the expedition.



On 25 August 2004, HKU mountaineering team arrived Lhasa and planned to stay there for four days for acclimatization as the altitude of Lhasa is already 3700 metres above sea level. Nevertheless, our teammates suffered a different degree of AMS such as headache, loss of appetite and dizziness. After a day of rest, the teammates recovered from AMS and continued to proceed in travelling to Base Camp (BC) of Mt. Qizi which is 4700 metres height.

The day of approaching Advance Base Camp (ABC) was the hard day, as we would climb 700 metres a day. With the effect of Hypoxia, the exercise at the altitudes would worsen the physical condition of team mates. One of the teammates was loss of conscious and spoke "rubbish" words during the trek, he was sent back to Base Camp with the doctor finally. However, symptoms tend to be worse at night. The other team mate was loss of conscious and breathlessness and relied on the oxygen supplied by oxygen cylinder. He was sent back to Base Camp immediately at midnight. Both recovered from sick while they were at Base Camp. We found that half of our team mates were suffered from mild to severe AMS at the altitude of ABC. Given they could not acclimatize at this altitude and continue to climb up, they therefore also were sent back to BC on that day. Only 11 students and instructors acclimatized at ABC and proceeded to climb up to Camp 1.



At 0300 on 4 August, 9 team mates woke up by snowstorm and attempted to summit the peak before sunrise. Having fought in storm for 3 hours, the first summit team cheered for the summit at 0630. The second team followed up to the summit at 0650. The day after the summit, 3 teammates, which went back to BC before, came back to ABC and tried to summit on 5 August. They made it happened finally. 12 of the team members summited Mt. Qizi with their faith and confidence.

The ultimate success of the expedition is we go back home safely.