



UIAA
Global Youth Summit 2004



TREKKING TO BASE CAMP AND MEMORIAL K2



The year 2004 is the 50th anniversary of the first ascent to the summit K2. In 1954 an Italian expedition went to the top of the second mountain in the world.

This year the Italian Alpine Club organized another expedition on the top and a trekking to Base Camp and to the Memorial K2 in the south slope at 5200 meters. I went with the second group. It was a great experience for me not only for mountaineering aspect but also for the human and social with the local people. Near the Baltoro glacier lives the Balti people. They are the famous "hunza", the porters of Karakorum.

Another group with thirteenth youth people and six youth leaders of Youth Mountaineering Italian Alpin Club went also to the Memorial K2. The leader of this group was Paolo Civera.

I met this group when they went down along the glacier and I went up. They were very tired but very very happy for this great experience. The age was from fifteenth to seventeenth years old. They hadn't a problem and fortunately a good weather.



Ten days are necessary from Islamabad to Base Camp K2 and another one to Memorial: two days by little bus from Islamabad to Skardu, the capital of Baltistan; one day on the off-road vehicle to Askole (3050 mt.), the last village before the Baltoro glacier; seven days by walk to Base Camp "Circo Concordia" at 4700 meters near the Gasherbrun IV, Chogolisa, Broad Peak and K2. Another one day to walk is necessary from Circo Concordia to Memorial.

All trekking is 210 kilometres by feet, of these 160 on the Baltoro and Godwin Austen glaciers. There aren't technical difficulties but you have to do much attention on the glacier because he is often covered by small, medium and large stones and you have to walk always to see where are the crevasses. There are many glaciers on the left and on the right and where they go in the Baltoro there are many skills of ice.

The temperature on the glacier, during the summer and with the sun, is very hot but when the sun goes

behind the clouds or the mountains, the temperature goes down of many grades.

For to come back to Askole are necessary no 7th but only 4th days to walk.

The life in oasis of Askole is very very difficult for Balti people. They haven't electricity and the water they take by a little river of which the water is brown colour. There are many youth people and, fortunately, there is a little school. There is also a little surgery constructed with the money of Italian alpinist group "Ragni di Lecco" near Milano but the big problem is that the doctor has only few medicines. For to go to the nearest hospital are necessary eight hours of off-road vehicle. The problem is that they hasn't an off-road vehicle and they have one only when some expedition arrives. I don't know how this will be possible in winter when there are meters of snow. Think us to Balti people when in our home we open the light, the gas and the hot water.



Paolo CAI



Images by Stephano Esente