

MARCH 30TH AND 31ST GOKYO AND DRAGNAK

THE WALK TO GOKYO WAS ONCE AGAIN BEAUTIFUL, AS WE FOLLOWED THE RIVER UPWARDS TOWARDS GOKYO LAKES. THE WEATHER CHANGED DRAMATICALLY AS WE ARRIVED AT THE FIRST LAKE, WITH AN ICY WIND BLASTING OUR FACES. THE LAKES ARE HALF FROZEN BUT NEAR THE SHORE THE WATER IS THE COLOUR OF THAT FOUND IN THE CARIBBEAN, JUST A SLIGHT TEMPERATURE DIFFERENCE!! SURROUNDED BY SNOW CAPPED MOUNTAINS GOKYO IS BREATHTAKING.

AFTER A 3 HOUR WALK WE ARRIVED AT FRIENDSHIP LODGE AND ANDRONICO AND I DECIDED TO GO UP GOKYO REE A PEAK OF 5,357M AND OFFERING SPECTACULAR VIEWS. BY THE TIME WE REACHED THE TOP OF GOKYO REE, OUR STUNNING VIEWS WERE REPLACED BY HEAVY BLACK CLOUDS. WE DESCENDED RAPIDLY, MY HANDS ARE STILL SUFFERING FROM THE FROST BITE I GOT ON OUR LAST CLIMB IN CHILE (MARMELECHO) AND I COULD FEEL THE BURNING PAIN IN MY FINGERTIPS. THIS REALLY WORRIED ME, IF MY HANDS FEEL LIKE THIS ON GOKYO REE WHAT THE HELL AM I GOING TO DO ON EVEREST- I WILL ENDEAVOUR TO BE A LITTLE BETTER PREPARED AND NOT GET CAUGHT IN MY FLIMSY GLOVES! NOTHING CHANGES QUICKER THAN THE WEATHER IN THE MOUNTAINS. MY ARCTERYX SHELL PANTS HAVE BEEN A LIFE SAVER AND I LIVE IN THEM, THEY COMPLETELY SHIELD ME FROM THE ICY WINDS WE KEEP ENCOUNTERING.

WE GOT BACK TO THE LODGE IN 2 AND A HALF HOURS AND HAD A LATE LUNCH OF DAL BAHT. WHILE THE OTHERS GOT UP THE FOLLOWING MORNING I HAD A NICE LONG LIE IN UNTIL 8.00AM. I GOT UP LEISURELY, PHONED MY SISTER LUCY IN HONG KONG AND CHECKED THAT EVERYONE WAS OK AND WAITED FOR THE GROUP TO COME BACK FROM GOKYO REE.

WE THEN HEADED TO DRAGNAK, OVER THE ROCKY MORAINÉ GLACIER, LOTS OF BOULDERS COVERING ICY CLIFFS, YOU ALMOST FEEL LIKE YOU ARE ON THE MOON. IT WAS STRANGE AS I WALKED OVER THIS UNDULATING BOULDER FIELDS, I WAS THINKING PROFOUNDLY FOR A CHANGE ABOUT HOW QUICKLY LIFE CAN CHANGE. LAST TIME I WALKED THIS EXACT ROUTE IN 2001 BUT HEADING TOWARDS GOKYO I WAS JUST ENGAGED TO MY BOYFRIEND OF 5 YEARS AND NOW 3 YEARS LATER ALMOST TO THE DAY IM BACK IN NEPAL ALONE TRYING TO CLIMB THE WORLDS HIGHEST MOUNTAIN.

WE ARRIVED IN DRAGNAK AND STAYED AT PERTEMBAS BROTHERS LODGE, WE LEAVE OVER THE CHOLA PASS TOMORROW ALL THE WAY TO LOBUCHÉ. ONE MORE DAY AND THEN WE WILL BE IN BASECAMP AND REALITY WILL REALLY SINK IN.