

Message from home

During my long escapades, I have a satellite phone with me. In the desert and at sea it is a great means of communication. - In a flat area, always a satellite flying above the ground, 750 km away from me, will catch my signal and send it home. In the Himalayas, using a satellite phone is difficult because the high mountains that surround us obscure access to the satellites.

Close to the southern Kangchenjunga Base Camp we rested on a high hill over 5,000 m. I pulled a phone out of my backpack and put it on a nearby rock. It was noon. The strong sun was shining. I, with two Sherpas, were shielded from the wind by a huge rock. We rested for an hour admiring the beautiful glacier flowing from the third highest mountain of the world. We talked about the last three weeks spent in high mountains. Ahead of us are four days of running down, another two days of driving and an hour's flight to Kathmandu.

After an hour of conversation, I took a nap for a moment. The silence was interrupted by one of Sherpa: "your phone is calling you" - he exclaimed. I took the device in my hand and saw some text messages from the office and a lot of text messages from home. It turned out that it would be good if I returned and helped my friend diligently. I had to return to one urgent meeting.

I made a short phone call to Kathmandu and informed my trekking agency that I urgently needed to return to Poland. "Give me ten minutes," - Pradeep answered. After a quarter of negotiations with the company renting helicopters came the message: "tomorrow the weather is terrible, but between 10 and 12 will be a weather window. The helicopter will try to get you to Kathmandu at 11.00 am. However, you must go over 1000 m down to the place where the helicopter can safely land.

The next day I ordered a wake-up call at five in the morning. We drank tea and at 10.30 we were at the agreed place. We waited for our helicopter.



Overnight in the riverbed

From my journal: "It always seemed to me that the most cult pilots are guys dressed in leather sitting at the controls of the worn Yeti Air planes flying to Lukla. I was wrong! Yesterday, another professional tried to reach me for eight hours. Repeatedly he tried to land on a ledge at an altitude of over 5000 m. Clouds and snow, however, did not allow him to land safely. Because there was a sudden break in the weather and the pilot was unable to return to the airport from which he flew for me, he landed in a dry river bed, where he spent the night in a helicopter. In the evening he left the helicopter in the valley and went two hours to the nearby hill, where he sent me a satellite message over the phone that he would make another attempt tomorrow at dawn. Today at 05:30 from behind the clouds and from behind the mountains a helicopter flew over my valley and after a while he took me on board. We started a long and bumpy flight between the mountains and between the clouds to Kathmandu. When, after 40 minutes of flight, it turned out that we have head wind and we do not have enough fuel to reach Kathmandu, the pilot rose up and connected via radio with his colleague who served in the Everest area. After another 40 minutes we landed on a small glade at the height of about three and a half thousand meters. After a few minutes a second helicopter came to us, and brought us 10 canisters of fuel. I was at the international airport in Kathmandu 90 minutes before my flight to Europe. Vive tough pilots flying by heli and flying old planes in Nepal!"

