



Journey to the Highest Point of Japan

M.G (Indonesia)

It was near the end of August when my friend offered me to join him to climb Mt. Fuji. That was the last week we can climb that highest mount in Japan. According to official information, the authorities only allowed climbing Mt. Fuji during summer which is in July to August. How if you want to go there without tour guide and you cannot speak or read Japanese? Don't worry, information is clearly provided in English there. The authority will give you a small brochure as guidance. By reading that brochure and following the direction sign you will reach the peak without worrying being lost.

A bus in front of Shinjuku Station that will bring us to Fifth Station of Mt. Fuji



Before climbing Mt. Fuji at the Fifth Station

How much should we spend to go to Mt. Fuji? If you already prepared your climbing gear, then you only need to pay ¥5,200 for round trip ticket bus from Shinjuku to the Fifth Station of Mt. Fuji. It takes around two hours to reach Fifth Station which

is located at altitude 2,304 m. It is over a half way to reach the peak of Mt. Fuji at 3,776 m height. On the climbing day, we leave Tokyo at 5 p.m. and reach the Fifth Station around 7 p.m. To save the time we have had our dinner on the bus.

Arriving at Fifth Station, we can feel the chill of the mountain area. We took a rest for a while, preparing our gear and went to the nearest shop to buy a wooden stick. That shop also provides other climbing equipments, so if we forget to bring some of the equipments; we can find it in this shop. Generally we should bring climbing gear and life supply. Climbing equipment consists of trekking shoes, climbing stick (you can buy it onsite), headlamp, skullcap, jacket, backpack and convenient trouser. Life supply consists of first aid kit and personal medicine, water and light meal. For light meal, we brought onigiri (Japanese rice ball). It was convenient to bring several small foods so we can eat it easily when taking a rest in several stations. Also, don't forget to bring a camera and plastic bag for garbage. The list of equipments is depicted in the picture here.→



Equipments needed for climbing Mt. Fuji

At around 8 p.m. we began our journey. We went from Kawaguchiko Fifth Station in Yamanashi prefecture and climb through Yoshida Trail. In the beginning there were few people along the trail. It pleased us for a while because we thought we were success to avoid crowdedness during climbing season. However after Eighth Station, bunch of people were coming out from several mountain huts. They use different strategy to climb Mt. Fuji. We found out that they start climbing in the afternoon, took a rest in the hut and then continue the journey in the midnight. Therefore near the midnight, gradually, the trail became crowded.

The trail we took was easy in the beginning but become steep and rocky near the summit. We moved with slow pace and tried to hike comfortably. We took frequent rest in each station if we feel tired. Climbing Mt. Fuji is about strategy and endurance, so don't rush yourself because it will make your body exhausted. We saw many younger climbers who rushed in climbing. They passed us in the beginning but then we found them exhausted in the middle of journey. Having enough sleep and rest before leaving also important because we will have an all night climbing. On that day I still had a laboratory experiment in the afternoon. I didn't have enough rest and it made me a sleepwalker near the end of our journey. It was dangerous!

After 8 hours journey (it was longer than average time of 7 hours), around 4 a.m., we finally reach the summit. Hundreds of people were already stand by in their spot to see the sunrise. It was a wonderful experience to see a sunrise at the highest point of "The Land of Rising Sun." Basically, Mt. Fuji is an active volcano mountain; therefore its surface is a typical barren land type. However when we reached the peak, the atmosphere was different; it was like a vibrant small village. There are food stall, temple and even post office there. We look around the mountain, took some pictures, have a breakfast and took a rest. It was very tired to reach there. Yet the pride of reaching the peak of Japan and seeing such beautiful scenery replaces our toil.



Then the time has come for us to go down. It took 3-4 hours to go back to Kawaguchiko Fifth Station. It was a sandy and dusty road all the way down. That is why bringing a mask and a sunglasses is important. We have to be careful because there is a branch that will lead us whether to Shizuoka prefecture or Yamanashi prefecture. We should pick the left one which lead to Yamanashi prefecture. We arrived at Kawaguchiko Fifth Station at 11 a.m. We cleaned-up our self and bought some omiyage in the nearest shop. Then we enter our bus and return to Tokyo with a priceless experience of conquering Mt. Fuji.