

4th Girimitra Convention: July 3, 2005

The trekking - mountaineering activities struck roots in Maharashtra around 1954, in the wake of the first successful scaling of Mt Everest. So in 2005, the theme was '50 Years of Mountaineering in Maharashtra'. Girivihar, the oldest trekking group in the state, accepted the responsibility of organizing the Convention. 2005 also marked the golden jubilee of successful scaling of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world. Colonel Narinder Kumar, who led the first successful Indian expedition there, was the chief guest at this time.

The main feature of the 2005 event was an audio-visual show on key developments in the field of mountaineering/ trekking in Maharashtra. Suhas Joshi, Rajnish Gore, Rajesh Gadgil, Chandrashekhar Damle, Amit Joshi, Sanjay Jangam, et al took a lot of efforts to put together the show. Hrishikesh Yadav, Shashi Ranade and Anand Palande provided valuable guidance.

On the occasion of golden jubilee of mountaineering, an exhibition on evolution of equipment was held. Abhijit Burman painstakingly contacted veteran trekkers to collect exhibits.

For the first time, the Convention had a non-Maharashtrian chief guest. It made the Girimitra Sammelan known outside the state. Colonel Kumar praised the organisation, and the trekking enthusiasts who had gathered. He also spoke at length about the expedition led by him. A Films Division documentary on the expedition was also screened.

Abhijit Burman, Vaibhav Mehta and Prakash Kelshikar participated in a discussion on 'Sports climbing'. It was moderated by Samir Karve; topics such as artificial wall climbing, sports climbing, and achieving the status of international sport for mountaineering were discussed.

For the first time, a steering committee was formed for the Girimitra Convention. Also, Girimitra Awards were instituted as below:

1. Girimitra Lifetime Achievement
2. Girimitra Giribhraman
3. Girimitra Social Work
4. Girimitra Mountaineer
5. Mountaineer of the Year
6. Rock Climber of the Year.

Another first was the publication of Girimitra Reference Diary, which holds information about trekking groups in Maharashtra, important websites, contact numbers, etc.

Senior mountaineer Mahesh Desai of Girivihar led the organising team. He was ably assisted by Prasanna Joshi, Hrishikesh Yadav and members of Chakram Hikers and YZ.

Documentation of mountaineering in Maharashtra began with this Convention.
