

Japanese Alpinists in the Himalaya

I. THE FIRST ASCENT OF CHOGOLISA

PROF. TAKEO KUWABARA

THE ACADEMIC ALPINE CLUB OF KYOTO went on an expedition to Chogolisa (7,654 m.; 25,110 ft.), in the Karakoram, in the summer of 1958 and succeeded in the ascent of the mountain, which had been attempted by the Duke of the Abruzzi in 1909 and by Hermann Buhl in 1957, but both of them failed.

The Expedition consisted of the following members: T. Kuwabara, leader, President of the Club, Professor at Kyoto Univ.; T. Kato, sub-leader, member of Manaslu Expedition 1953; M. Fujihira, member of Annapurna Expedition of 1953; M. Yamaguchi; M. Wakizawa, member of Annapurna Expedition 1953; M. Nakashima, M.D.; K. Hirai; Y. Takamura; G. Iwatsubo, member of Swat Himalaya Expedition 1957; T. Haga; Y. Imagawa, Interpreter; M. Ushioda, cameraman; Capt. A. Wajih, liaison officer.

June 21 we, together with 9 high-altitude porters and 152 coolies, started from Skardu, and via Askole and Concordia, reached on July 8 our Base Camp on the moraine at the altitude of 4900 m. (16,000 ft.), at the foot of a steep precipice hung from the northwest ridge of Baltoro Kangri.

We took the way through the ice-fall hung between two massifs of Chogolisa and Baltoro Kangri, and made Camp I (5400 m.; 17,700 ft.) on a plateau, Camp II (5900 m.; 19,350 ft.) near Kondus Saddle, Camp III (6400 m.; 21,000 ft.) at the foot of Ice Dome and Camp IV (6700 m.; 22,000 ft.) at the shoulder of it. Buhl's highest tent was found in the vicinity of Camp IV. July 29, cutting across the dome flank despite the bad weather, Camp V was pitched on an unstable rock-shelf at the altitude of 7000 m. (23,000 ft.). July 31st Fujihira and Hirai tried to attack the summit from this camp, and spending more than four hours in descending the dangerous steep ridge of 60 degree to the col between the main peak and Ice Dome, they had no choice but to return at the height of 7200 m. (23,600 ft.) at 4:30 in the afternoon. Having observed from the ridge that the glacier lying to the south of Ice Dome was broad and gentle enough, they took their way down on this glacier and got to Camp III without any trouble after 17 hours' labor.

Immediately we resolved to make the second assault on the summit by way of this glacier. Camp V and Camp IV were removed by the support members, who, starting again from Camp III, pitched New Camp IV at the altitude of 6700 m. (22,000 ft.), some 200 m. (650 ft.) lower than the col. The plan of pitching another higher tent had to be given up on account of a sign of bad weather, and on August 4 Fujihira and Hirai made the second attack from New Camp IV. It was splendid fine weather. They started at 4:30 in the morning and reached the col in 40 minutes, and furnished with oxygen apparatus (flow-rate of 2 litres/minute), went up persistently the east ridge with ceaseless care against gigantic snow cornice on the right hand. The snow was deep, at places it came up to breast, and there was also a threat of a snowslide. Though oxygen bottles were emptied at about 1:00 in the afternoon, they were determined to continue climbing. The top ridge was gained at 4:00 and after climbing the rocky pinnacle wall of 40 m. (130 ft.) they stood on the top at 4:30 in the afternoon, when they saw a Brocken monster in the mist. The top was too small in space to be occupied by the two. Thirty minutes stay there and they started on their way back. The sun set completely on the way and it was 10:30 in the evening when the two, by the help of a head-lamp, got to the camp: a hard labor of 18 hours.

The support members ascended two unnamed peaks, a 6753 m. (22,155 ft.) peak on the south of Kondus Saddle, and a 7000 m. (23,000 ft.) peak on the south of Ice Dome. We called them Kondus Peak and Kaberi Peak, respectively. August 10 all the members came down to Base Camp, and started there on the 20th, came back, by way of the very course of going, again to Skardu on 31st of the month.

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II. BHUTAN HIMALAYA

SASUKE NAKAO, *University of Osaka Prefecture, Sakai, Japan*

THANKS to the kind invitation from H. H. Maharaja of Bhutan, I traveled nearly 1000 miles inside Bhutan from June to November 1958 for the botanical collections. On the way I entered three times into the different parts of the main Himalayan range and made reconnaissances for future mountain climbing.

There are two ways from Paro Dzong to reach Chomo Lhari Gompa, which is situated leaning to huge boulders of the end of an old glaciated valley of 3900 m. (12,800 ft.) altitude. From there the full view of the

mountains was oppressing. At the northwestern corner of Bhutan border are gathered many 7000-meter peaks (23,000 ft.), all are glittering from the gentle alpine meadows of yak grazing. The main peaks are Tsulim Khon, Takha Khon, Masa Khon, and their satellites. These peaks can be accessible from Lingshi Dzong or Laya village. The Khula Kangri (local name Kiri Khari) dominates the uppermost mountains of Pho Chu, Trongsa Chu, Bumtang Chu, and Kuru Chu. Peaks around there offer many alluring future attempts for alpinists. These are most easy to approach from the old trodden road from Bumtang to Tibet.

The Bhutan Himalaya, in general, is not steep, it is rather slow and gentle and thickly covered by dense forests. It contains very wide alpine highlands and the peaks, higher than 6000 meters (20,000 ft.), are abruptly towering from the green pastures. The mountains can hardly ever be seen from June to September because of their roaming monsoon clouds. But from the middle of September clear sky occurs in short intervals and it becomes quite clear from the middle of October. The journey to the mountains of Bhutan is a pleasant one, riding all the way on the tough pony or the strong mule. The river-bridges are all cantilever construction and the pack mules can cross easily on them.

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III. FROM JUGAL HIMAL TO LANGTANG HIMAL

KYUYA FUKATA, *leader*

OUR TEAM was quite a queer little party consisting of four members: a writer, an artist, a mountain photographer, and a doctor, with an average age of 45. On 17 April 1958, these four members left Kathmandu with one liaison officer, three Sherpas, and 80 porters. After eleven days' caravan we arrived at a point about 4100 meters (13,500 ft.) high on Jugal Himal and set up a Base Camp there.

With the intention of climbing Big White Peak (7083 m.; 23,240 ft.) the highest one, we first reconnoitered Dorje Lakpa Glacier, but on learning that it was difficult to try, we changed our plan and took Purbi Chachumb Glacier.

Owing to bad weather a week passed before we were able to set up Camp III at a point on the glacier, 4900 m. (16,000 ft.). We waited for three days in Camp III for an improvement in the weather, but the highest point we reached was a ridge on the frontier (about 5500 m.; 18,000 ft.).

After we returned to Base Camp, we made our way to Langtang Himal.

Tackling the Panch Pokhari ridge, we passed through the Helm district and arrived at Tarke Gyang through the center of that district, then went over Ganja La and down to Langtang Khola. In the Survey of India, Ganja La was marked as 5624 m. (18,442 ft.) on the map, but my altimeter, which I had brought from Japan, did not indicate more than 5050 m. (16,750 ft.).

Time and money did not allow us to go further than Langsisa before we returned, although we had intended to climb to the source of the Langtang Himal Glacier. Making our way from Langtang to the Trisul River we returned to Kathmandu on the 11th of June.

Our small private expedition was not able to achieve any fresh results in the way of mountaineering record, but we were rewarded with a lot of photographs and sketches.

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IV. HIMALCHULI, 1958

ICHIRO KANESAKA, *leader*

TWO Japanese members, Ichiro Kanesaka and Shojiro Ishizaka; a liaison officer, Gopal Raj Pant; and three Sherpas, Gyaltsen Norbu, Lakpa Tenzing, and Pasang Tempa, started from Kathmandu with thirty-nine porters on an expedition to reconnoiter Himalchuli on 5 September 1958, and arrived at Manru on the 19th, via Trisuli Bazar, Arughat Bazar, and the monsoon road in the Buri Gandaki Valley. After setting up their base there, though they met with interference by the Tibetan villagers in the upper Buri Gandaki because of religious objection, the members solved the problem, and reconnoitred Himalchuli, with the assistance of the three Sherpas and two porters from Kathmandu, from a valley which runs into the Buri Gandaki below Namru and is called the Shurang.

They set up Advance Base at a height of 4150 m. (13,600 ft.) in a grassy part of the Shurang Valley on 30 September. They traced the valley to its source, and advanced their camp, Camp I, to a col named the Lidanda Nokkoshi (Pass) at a height of 5100 m. (16,750 ft.) on 2 October. Just after the monsoon was over they followed a spur leading to the east ridge of Himalchuli, and settled Camp II at a height of 5750 m. (18,850 ft.) on the east ridge. On the next day, 8 October, they made a final reconnaissance up to the base of a steep gendarme at a height of 6250 m. (17,500 ft.) on the east ridge. The glacier begins from Camp II, and on the lower part snow is seen occasionally in that season. The east ridge is so wide and gentle that even a weasel could climb it except at the gendarme.

The Himalayan Committee of the Japanese Alpine Club requested the expedition to reconnoitre a valley which runs into Lidanda as well, but the leader of the expedition could not make the Lidanda villagers change their firm conviction, and took photographs only from a hill on the left bank of the valley.

After reconnoitering, the expedition left Namru for home, with fifteen porters, on 11 October, and arrived at Pokhara on the 26th, via Sama, Larkya Pass, Thonje, and Khudi.

A climbing expedition of the Japanese Alpine Club is going to try the route which was found by the reconnoitering party. The problems of climbing are supposed to be the transporting of about one ton of equipment and provisions across the gendarme on the east ridge and the climbing of a precipice leading to the northwestern shoulder of the final peak, of which the height was measured as about 700 m. (2300 ft.).

