

Southeastern China

Kang Karpo Tragedy, 1991. Kang Karpo (6740 meters, 22,113 feet), as it is called by the local population, is known as Meili by the Chinese. The highest mountain in Yunnan, it has resisted strong Japanese and American attempts. In late 1990, a party of eleven Japanese of the Academic Alpine Club of Kyoto with Jiro Inoue as climbing leader and seven Chinese tried again to climb the peak. On December 14, they set up Base Camp at 3800 meters and soon had three camps established on the northeast ridge of the mountain. On December 28, they made a summit try which reached 6470 meters. Camp III, located at 5100 meters in the upper basin of the Min-Yun Glacier, was more comfortable than Base Camp and so the whole expedition, except for one ill Chinese climber, was there in the first days of January, waiting for better weather. They were in constant contact with the Chinese liaison officer, Mr. Chen, in Base Camp. Each climber had a walkie-talkie and so it was impossible when no further contact could be made on January 4 that all the radios were out of order. The camp was doubtless overwhelmed by an avalanche. The Chinese Mountaineering Association and the Academic Alpine Club of Kyoto both sent rescue parties, but deep snow made the approach difficult. The Chinese got to Base Camp on January 9 and the Japanese on the 20th. The Chinese party was able to reach Camp II in the col above the Min-Yun Glacier at 5300 meters. (Camp II was 200 meters higher than Camp III.) However, the dangerous conditions prevented their getting to Camp III. The Japanese rescue party reached 4200 meters. On January 25, the Chinese and Japanese parties decided to give up further action because of continuing bad weather. An aerial photograph showed thick avalanche debris near Camp III.

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Gongga Shan Attempt. A four-man expedition to Gongga Shan was led by Akio Kanagoe. He had been the leader of the tragic 1981 northeast-ridge expedition which had lost eight of its members. This time the Japanese attempted the northwest ridge, by which the first ascent had been made. They established Base Camp and Camps I, II, III, IV and V at 4000, 4250, 4950, 5740, 6350 and 6450 meters on April 1, 6, 12, 19, 28 and 30. On May 1, Kanagoe and Kenji Yamamoto left Camp V but high winds prevented their getting to the summit.

Gonga Shan Attempt. An Italian expedition led by Evanio Marchesani failed to climb Gongga Shan. Details are lacking.

Namcha Barwa. The Japanese Alpine Club has permission to try this remote peak in a joint expedition with the Chinese in 1991. In November and December, a reconnaissance party of 4 Japanese and 6 Chinese led by Tsuneo Shigehiro explored the west-northwest and the south ridges.