

UT Mountain Sickness" expedition. The Johnsons began hydrating Ishikawa, as his only fluid consumption had been one liter that he drank on the 24th. By the morning on the 26th, Ishikawa felt stronger. At 1300 the Johnsons reported that Ishikawa would be descending with the five-member "Korean 99" party to 16,200 feet. Robinson arranged for his patrol to assist Ishikawa down the fixed lines. At 1434 patrol members DJ Nechrony and Rod Willard met Ishikawa on the fixed lines and began lowering him. Robinson, VIP Joel Geisendorfer, and PJ John Loomis, along with Nechrony and Willard, assisted Ishikawa back to the 14,200-foot camp, arriving at 1645 .

VIP Dr. Bob Desiderio and Willard treated Ishikawa. He had frostbite on the middle three fingers of his right hand and the last three fingers of his left hand. He also suffered frostbite on his nose with minor cold injuries to his toes. Robinson felt that Ishikawa should be evacuated from the 14,200-foot camp due to the limited use of his hands and the fact that he was solo climbing.

Poor weather prevented his evacuation until the 31st. At 1005 the LAMA helicopter was able to land at 14,200 feet. Ishikawa was flown to the Kahiltna basecamp where he was transferred to a Talkeetna Air Taxi fixed wing aircraft and flown out to Talkeetna and transported by a shuttle service to Providence Hospital where he was admitted in the evening of the 31st.

Analysis

Here is a good example of a solo climber relying on the assistance of others. Without this help, Tomoyasu Ishikawa may well have suffered further injury. A solo climber in trouble will add to the burden of private climbers and rescuers where the situation may only be an inconvenience when climbers are climbing in a group. (Source: Roger Robinson, Mountaineering Ranger)

INADEQUATE FOOD AND WATER, CLIMBING ALONE

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

Shigeo Tamoi (33) began his solo climb of Mount McKinley's West Buttress on May 28. He ascended to the 14,200-foot camp in three days and then he acclimatized for three more days. On June 3 at 0700 Tamoi attempted a one-day ascent from the 14,200-foot camp carrying no survival gear, minimum clothing, and one liter of water. He was reported to have reached the summit in the evening and then descended to the 19,500-foot level (Football Field) where he collapsed on the trail. The temperature was approximately 25°F and the wind was 10 mph. Michal Krissak of the "Slovak Expedition 99" was also soloing down from the summit when he noticed a group of five climbers standing around Tamoi. As he approached on the trail, the five climbers left Tamoi behind and continued their descent. Krissak encountered Tamoi at 2100 lying face down, semi-conscious. Initially Krissak was unable to arouse Tamoi, but eventually Tamoi said he was thirsty and wanted to sleep. Krissak knew the situation for Tamoi was life threatening in the bitter cold if he didn't try to get him down. Krissak was able to lift Tamoi to his feet and support him under his shoulder. They had walked a short distance when three other descending climbers approached them. The three were unwilling to assist Krissak. He argued

with them to at least give Tamoi some water or he might die. They finally gave Tamoi a little to drink then continued their descent leaving Krissak to deal with Tamoi.

The descent went very slowly with Krissak supporting Tamoi. Upon reaching Denali Pass, three American climbers approached the pair on their descent. By this time Krissak was tired and knew he needed Tamoi on a belay in order to safely descend the traverse. Krissak told the Americans about Tamoi's condition and asked if they could put him on their rope. The Americans refused to help and stated that they were cold and needed to keep going down. Krissak was again left to deal with Tamoi. Without a rope, Krissak began the traverse from the pass by supporting Tamoi from the rear. Tamoi could barely support his own weight. Twice he lost his footing and was held in place by Krissak.

At 0100 Tamoi and Krissak arrived exhausted to the 17,200-foot camp. Krissak began calling for help on his CB radio when NPS VIP Joel Geisendorfer and Alaska Air National Guardsman John Loomis who were camped nearby offered their assistance. Tamoi was provided fluids and a sleeping bag. While Tamoi slept in the supine position, Geisendorfer heard him vomit. He was able to clear Tamoi's airway. The pair began hydrating Tamoi first thing in the morning. At 1000 Tamoi was able to descend to the 14,200-foot camp with a Korean party. Tamoi was able to continue descending without assistance to the landing strip where he flew off on June 5th.

Analysis

Shigeo Tamoi is a pretty lucky man. Without the persistent efforts of Michal Krissak, Tamoi would certainly have been left for dead. Krissak risked his own life where others refused under the harsh conditions. It is hard to blame these other climbers, as sometimes it's just about impossible to help someone if you feel your own life at risk. This ranger heard about Tamoi's rescue from the staff at the 17,000-foot camp and had to literally search out Krissak in order to document this remarkable incident. Even then Krissak felt he did nothing out of the ordinary. When Ranger Daryl Miller interviewed Tamoi through an interpreter in Talkeetna, he found that Tamoi couldn't remember his summit day, the rescue, or even returning to the 14,200-foot camp. (Source: Roger Robinson, Mountaineering Ranger)

INEXPERIENCE, FAILURE TO TURN BACK

Alaska, Mount McKinley, West Buttress

Mike McCarthy (32) faxed his Mount McKinley climbing registration form to the Talkeetna Ranger Station on March 16. His climbing experience consisted of three hikes up Long's Peak in Rocky Mountain National Park. Ranger George Beilstein reviewed the registration form then called McCarthy on March 19. Beilstein was concerned about McCarthy's lack of experience and emphasized his concerns about solo glacier travel. McCarthy stated that he was aware of the hazards and would try to find a partner. No other contact was made until May 16, when McCarthy checked in for his climb at the Talkeetna Ranger