

## KHUMBU REGION

### ROLWALING HIMAL

*Chekigo attempt.* Opened in 2002 as a trekking peak, 6,257m Chekigo, which lies east northeast of Beding in the Rolwaling Valley, was attempted by a French commercially organized party in 2004. After the usual problems with Maoists, they were able to reach about 6,000m on the summit ridge of this fine, fluted snow and ice pyramid. Chekigo has no recorded ascent but is thought to have been climbed by a route of around AD+ in standard. It was first attempted as long ago as 1955 by Alf Gregory's Merseyside expedition.

*Tengi Ragi Tau (6,943m), north ridge, attempt.* Tengi Ragi Tau is one of the peaks of the Seventh Goddess in the Rolwaling Himal; its pyramidal peak can be seen from Namche Bazaar. When the Nepal government opened this mountain in 2002, the Japanese Alpine Club (JAC) planned to organize a Senior Expedition to this mountain in pre-monsoon 2003. Tengi Ragi Tau was an ideal target for seniors who wished to climb a virgin peak because it features easy approaches, an appropriate altitude, and a manageable route for seniors without bottled oxygen. This mountain, however, was climbed for the first time via the southeast face (Tesi Lapche La side) by another Japanese team in December 2002. The party was composed of 6 senior members, who were 59 years old on average, with 6 climbing Sherpas and 4 kitchen staff.

On 25th April we set off from base camp at around 4,700m below the glacial moraine descending from the pyramidal peak of Pamalka (6,344m). Over the next week we reached C2 at the saddle between Pamalka and Langmoche Ri, but were blocked by deep snow and high winds. On 3rd May, we set off from base camp to attempt an alternative new route. Arriving at C2, however, strong wind again stopped our upward progress. On 5th May we started trail breaking, this time along the highest point on an easy slope, which fortunately led us to crusty parts. Then the slope led steeply upwards to a point at 6,100m from where we climbed a couloir located in the middle of the snow flank of Langmoche Ri. We progressed smoothly along the route with five fixed ropes, following this couloir which becomes increasingly steep until thin ice-covered slabs appeared above at 6,250m. A young Sherpa tried to surmount this difficult section for almost one hour while we were exposed in the couloir to continuous blasts of chilling spindrift avalanches. Our Sirdar also tried to tackle these slabs for a while, but climbed down with discouraging words, saying that these icy slabs could not be managed because of the impossibility of piton placement. Knowing not what to do next, we climbed down to C2.

We wanted to try to find a possible route to the east side of the flank even with the limited ropes and food remaining at C2. But our Sherpas were completely discouraged with these failures on the west ribs and the technically difficult couloir route. Unhappily, we realized that our physical competence as seniors was not strong enough to establish another new route by ourselves without support from the Sherpas, which was not forthcoming.

On 10th May, we cleaned the site of our base camp for the return journey back to Lukla. Leader: Ryouzai Nakahara (61); Climbing Leader: Masayoshi Fujii (57); Climbing Members: Minoru Tsubakuro (61), Isao Iguchi (59), Yoshimoto Naruse (57), Hisa Naruse (57).

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*\*Adapted from Japanese Alpine News, TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, Editor*