

DAMODAR HIMAL

Yakawa Kang (6,482m), south face. At 12:50 p.m. on November 7, Sherpas Dawa Norbu (known as Ang Danu), Dawa Tshering, Tshering Tashi, and I reached the top of Yakawa Kang. It had taken 11 hours and was the result of three years' planning. It marked the 60th anniversary of the Shizuoka City Alpine Federation. We flew from Pokhara to Jomsom on October 30 and reached base camp on the Thorung La (5,416m) five days later. I didn't feel well and couldn't eat for three days. During this time, on November 4 and 5, the three Sherpas fixed rope up the south face of the mountain from 5,800m–6,300m.

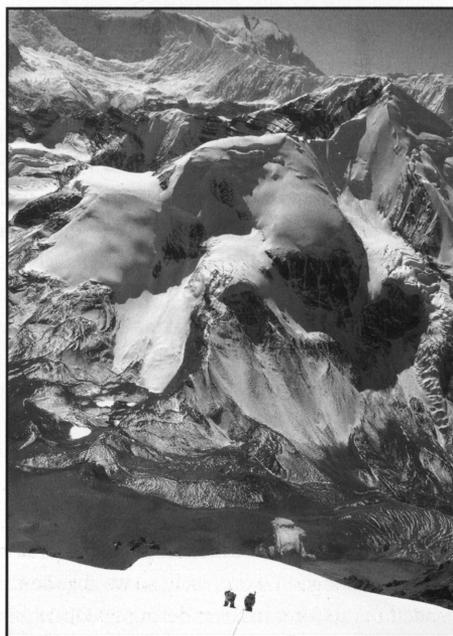
On the 6th we all rested in base camp, and on the 7th we left at 1:50 a.m. for a summit attempt. It took two hours to climb the lower moraine slopes and then a further six to overcome the rock walls, which were steep and friable. Above, the ice was steep, taxing my calves and thighs. From the top of the fixed lines, we continued roped on easier-angled snow to the summit. From here we contacted base camp, took pictures, and then rested for 20 minutes before starting down. The batteries ran out in our headlamps, and I began to feel faint from tiredness.

Despite cold and dark conditions, various members at base camp came up to assist us in the lower section, and we finally reached the base, exhausted, at 6:30 p.m. After a day's rest we started for Jomsom, from where we returned to Kathmandu by bus, arriving on the 12th. I'm proud of my first ascent, which was achieved with the support of many people.

HIDENOBU TSUJI, *Japan*



Yakawa Kang from southwest showing route of ascent. Thorung La is just below the bottom of the image. *Hidenobu Tsuji*



On the upper slopes of Yakawa Kang, looking southwest over Khatang Kang (6,484m) to the distant north face of Annapurna (8,091m). *Hidenobu Tsuji*

Editor's Note: Although this mountain lies just north of the popular Annapurna Circuit trek, there was no recorded ascent prior to 2010. However, in November 2009 Shoji Sakamoto (Japan) and Pasang Kaji Sherpa reached ca 6,450m on much the same route as the first ascensionists. On their first attempt they reached ca 6,200m, just below the snow line, having fixed rope from 5,800m–6,100m, but turned back as they were late in the day. On the second attempt they fixed more rope up 50° ice to 6,250m before continuing to their high point. It was a little after 2 p.m., and they were buffeted by a strong cold wind, so they retreated.