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Elizabeth Hawley, who died in Kathmandu on 26 January 2018 aged 94 years, was an American journalist living in Nepal since 1960, regarded as the undisputed authority on mountaineering in Nepal. Born 9 November 1923 in Chicago, Illinois and educated at the University of Michigan, she was famed worldwide as a “one-woman mountaineering institution”, systematically compiling a detailed Himalayan database of expeditions still maintained today by her team of volunteers, and published by the American Alpine Club.

Respected for her astute political antennae and famously formidable, Miss Hawley represented Time Life then Reuters since 1960 as Nepal correspondent for 25 years. She is credited with mentoring reporters and setting journalistic standards in Nepal, competing to file stories from the communications-challenged Nepal of the 1960s. She worked with the pioneer adventure tourism operators, Tiger Tops, from its inception in 1965 with John Copeman, until she retired as AV Jim Edward's trusted advisor in 2007.

For Sir Edmund Hillary, she managed the Himalayan Trust since it started in the mid-1960s, dispensing funds to build hospitals, schools, bridges, forest nurseries and scholarships for the people of the Everest region. Generations of Sherpas remember being overawed by the rigor of Miss Hawley's interviews, and quake at the memory of her cross-examinations when collecting their scholarship funds. Sir Edmund Hillary described Elizabeth Hawley as “a most remarkable person” and “a woman of great courage and determination.” She served as New Zealand Honorary Consul to Nepal for 20 years until retiring in 2010.

Elizabeth first came to Nepal via India for a couple of weeks in February 1959. She was on a two-year round the world trip that took her to Eastern Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. Bored with her job as researcher-reporter with Fortune magazine in New York, she had cashed her savings to travel as long as they lasted. Nepal had been on her mind since reading a 1955 New York Times article about the first tourists who visited the then-Kingdom.

Because of her media contacts, the Time Life Delhi bureau chief asked her to report on Nepal's politics. It was an interesting time - as one of only four foreign journalists, she
was present when King Mahendra handed over the first parliamentary constitution, which paved the way for democracy in Nepal. Fascinated by Nepal’s politics and the idea of an isolated country emerging into the modern 20th century, she returned in 1960 and never left, living in the same Dilli Bazaar apartment, the same blue Volkswagen beetle car, and generations of faithful retainers.

A diminutive figure of slight build with a keen look, Elizabeth was bemused at the universal attention she received. Her Himalayan Database expedition records are trusted by mountaineers, newswires, scholars, and climbing publications worldwide, published by Richard Salisbury and the American Alpine Club. She was one of only 25 honorary members of the Alpine Club of London, and has been formally recognized by the New Zealand Alpine Club and the Nepal Mountaineering Association. In 2004 she received the Queen's Service Medal for Public Services for her work as New Zealand honorary consul and executive officer of Sir Edmund Hillary’s Himalayan Trust. She was awarded the King Albert I Memorial Foundation medal and was the first recipient of the Sagarmatha National Award from the Government of Nepal.

Elizabeth’s career in the collection of mountaineering data started by accident: “I’ve never climbed a mountain, or even done much trekking.” As part of her Reuters’ job, she began to report on mountaineering activities and in those pioneering days of first ascents and mountain exploration, there was strong media interest in Himalayan expeditions. She relied heavily on the knowledge of mountaineer Col Jimmy Roberts, founder of Mountain Travel.

Since 1963 she has met every expedition to the Nepal Himalaya both before and after their ascents, including those who climbed from Tibet. Her records contain detailed information about more than 20,000 ascents of about 460 Nepali peaks, including those that border with China and India. Over the course of some 7,000 expedition interviews, her research work has sparked and resolved controversies. Elizabeth has seen the Nepal mountaineering scene transformed from an exclusive club to a mainstream obsession.

Elizabeth did not suffer fools gladly.
Though some mountaineers were intimidated by her interrogations - sometimes jokingly referred to as an expedition's "second summit," - serious alpinists greatly admired her. "If I need information about climbing 8,000-meter peaks, I used to go to her," says Italian climbing legend Reinhold Messner. Nepali trek operator and environmentalist Dawa Steven Sherpa underlines the point: "Although it's the authorities that should have been doing this, they're not as strict or accurate as Miss Hawley. One of her biggest contributions is keeping mountaineers honest."

Elizabeth applied her trademark scrupulous precision to summarizing the political and development events in Nepal in her monthly diary, published in 2015 in two volumes as "The Nepal Scene: Chronicles of Elizabeth Hawley 1988-2007". They stand as a faithful and unique historical record of the extraordinary changes that took place in Nepal over nearly two decades.

Her enviable journalistic sources were based on long friendships with the political, panchayat and Rana elite. She had the confidence of a wide range of prominent Nepalis, and shared a hairdresser with the (then) Queen. Educated as an historian, Elizabeth regarded herself as a reporter not a writer, stringently recording Nepal's political and mountaineering facts with minimal opinion or analysis. Although there is no disguising her liberal bent and her admiration for the force of democracy. Former American Ambassador Peter Bodde said, Elizabeth Hawley was one of Nepal’s “living treasures” and “her contribution to the depth of knowledge and understanding between Nepal and the US was immense.”

Elizabeth Hawley’s achievements have featured in many books and articles about Nepal, and her biography by Bernadette McDonald, I'll Call You in Kathmandu, was published in 2005, then updated and reprinted as Keeper of the Mountains. In 2013, to mark the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Everest, Elizabeth was featured in the award-winning US television documentary of the same name, produced by Allison Otto. On screen in Keeper of the Mountains, her straightforward manner and fearless modesty made her something of a cult classic. In 2014 the Nepal government named a 6,182 meters (20,330 feet) peak in honour of her contribution to mountaineering. Elizabeth was not impressed: "I thought it was just a joke. Mountains should not be named after people."

Miss Elizabeth Hawley is the last of the first generation of foreigners who made their
life in Nepal, single and determinedly independent. She is survived by her nephew Michael Hawley Leonard and has bequeathed her library and records to the American Alpine Club. As both a successful woman in a man's world and a highly visible foreigner recording Nepal's history, we are all in her debt. She defied the conventions of her time, and determined to live life on her own terms and in her own incomparable style.
First Ascents of Sunkala Topi, Lek Fett, and Pratibandhit Lek  
Nepal, Namja Laguja Danda and Kangla Himal

SUNKALA TOPI, NILS ON TRUE SUMMIT

SUPPORTED BY the German Alpine Club, Nils Beste, Bernde Emmerich, Franz Friebel, Harry Kirschenhofer, and I flew to Jumla in western Nepal at the start of October. From there we drove 10 hours to reach Gamghadi, north of Jumla, and then trekked for five days, heading east up the Mugu Karnali Nadi and then turning north into the Mugu Khola. Shortly before the Namja La on the border with Tibet, we turned northwest into the Takya Khola (Takya Valley), where we set up base camp at 4,666m (29°55.262’N, 82°20.214’E). We were now beneath the highest peak of the Namja Laguja Danda, a small range between the Kangla Himal in the west and Kanti Himal in the east. The Namja La appears to be an actively used pass for trade between Mugu and Tibet, judging by the Lhasa beer and Chinese Budweiser cans found along the way.

On October 12 we established a high camp at 5,148m (29°55.246’N, 82°30.367’E), southwest of the highest summit, which we would subsequently name Sunkala Topi (5,865m). We awoke next day to the bad news that Harry felt unwell and would not be accompanying us. The rest of the team set out at 6 a.m. and climbed northeast up a ridge and through a maze of scree and boulders to a plateau. A rocky ridge then led us
down onto the glacier that drapes the south flank of the mountain between the west and south summits.

We slanted up across this glacier to reach the crest of the south ridge of the main peak. After reaching a false summit at 5,856m (29°55'39.67"N, 82°31'12.25"E), we saw that the actual top, just to the north, would involve a difficult crossing. Nils was the only one to take up the challenge: He downclimbed, overcame a horizontal crevasse, and finished up a knife-edge to the true summit. Clouds and strong wind denied a decent panorama, but a glimpse to the west gave a brilliant view over the Kangla Group, where three pyramidal peaks above 6,000m caught our attention.

On the 14th we left the Takya Khola and crossed a pass into the western Chawarsing Khola (Chawarsing Valley). Shortly below the pass we camped at a lake (ca 4,800m), and from here Nils decided to try the border peak of Lek Fett (5,767m), the summit immediately north of the pass. His plan was to traverse rock and scree on the southwest face to a scree couloir that would lead to the north west ridge.

He set out at 8 a.m. on October 15, finding the frozen scree difficult to handle and taking two hours to climb 600m to the ridge. To avoid the further inconvenience of rock towers on the crest, Nils descended to a relatively benign glacier basin on the far (northeast) side. It led to a 50° névé slope, which he climbed for 150m to regain the ridge at around 5,550m. A wide snow crest led easily to the summit (5,767m, 29°56'55.11"N, 82°29'45.94"E), which he reached at 11 a.m. The crux had been crossing the open bergschrund between the glacier and the 50° slope. A clear blue sky presented a
beautiful panorama. To the east lay Sunkala Topi and to the west the unclimbed N3 (ca 5,850m from contours on the HGM-Finn map); farther to the west lay the seductive pyramid peaks of the Kangla Himal, and, more distant, unclimbed peaks of the Gorakh Himal.

That same day, we descended the Chuwarsing Khola into the Take Khola and camped at the high meadow of Take Kharka (4,200m). On October 16, Nils, Franz, and I left this camp and entered the Kangla Khola. After 6km another valley branches northeast toward the Kang La on the Tibetan border. I felt weak thanks to a respiratory infection, and rather than slow down the other two, I decided to quit. They continued another 3km to a campsite in a side valley at about 4,700m. Their goal was Pratibandhit Lek, the high peak immediately east of the Kang La. This pass is used for trade, and there is a good path on the southeast side of the valley, avoiding the glacier. In contrast to what is shown on old maps, there is no glacier to cross to reach the pass.

The two left camp at 4:45 next morning and walked the 4km to the pass (5,400m). They then ascended scree, snow, and mixed terrain for 300m to reach the northwest ridge of Pratibandhit Lek at about 5,700m. This ascent was 55° and corniced, with steep drops on both sides (“more impressive than the Biancograt on Piz Bernina”). This ridge led
southeast for 2km to the summit (6,130m, 30°00'13.63"N, 82°25'14.31"E). Observations from the top, and on Google Earth, indicate that Pratibandhit Lek is the highest peak of the Kangla Himal. However, since various peaks have similar elevations, further ascents (particularly of Kangla II) are needed for confirmation.

Another day of perfect weather gave a fantastic panorama over the Kangla Himal’s unclimbed peaks. West of the Kang La is the unclimbed pyramid that we dubbed Kangla II (on the Japanese sketch map it is referred to as Ngomo Ding-Ding, 6,133m HGM-Finn) with a beautiful snow and ice northeast ridge. Behind lay unclimbed summits of the Gorakh Himal, including the impressive pyramid of Absi (a.k.a. Gorakh Kang, 6,254m). To the east the view stretched as far as Kajrioba (6,883m), and to the southwest as far as Saipal (7,031m).

We completed the expedition by walking out to the west to Simikot.
Kanti Himal, Kojichuwa Valley, exploration. The second team visiting the Kojichuwa Valley, arriving as the Spanish were leaving, was the four-man British group of Nick Colton, Ed Douglas, Julian Freeman-Attwood, and Rob Greaves. In 2007 Colton and Freeman-Attwood had been part of a team that explored the neighboring Koji Valley and climbed two peaks on the frontier ridge west-southwest of Rongla South (AAJ 2008). In April '09 they established base camp lower in the valley than the Mallorcan and explored the area, climbing six small peaks of 4,900m–5,400m. The first two were on the southeast side of the lower main valley more or less opposite base camp, while the remaining four, including the smallest, lay farther up on the opposite side of the valley, and to the southwest of the Spanish base camp. One was a prominent rock peak climbed from the back, and the rest were on a ridge running northwest from this peak. It is possible the Mallorcan also climbed one of these. Some involved snow slopes; others were rough scrambles over snow-covered scree and broken rock. The team noted an excellent ice/mixed line on the west face of Mugu Chuli.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, Mountain INFO, from information provided by NICK COLTON AND JULIAN FREEMAN-ATTWOOD
"A short distance above Mugu village, in a side valley to the west, lies Mugu Arch, with the main summit at approximately 5,430m. It was first noted in 2009 by a British expedition led by Freeman-Attwood. Marvelous rock formations created an impressive..."
rock face with a beautiful rock arch high up in the east face. Nils Beste and Bernhard Emmerich briefly explored the peak in October. From Mugu village at around 3,000m the two climbed up the side valley and camped at around 4,500m close to the wall. The serious rock face starts at around 4,800m but unveiled a more demanding climb than expected. They soon realized they had too little rock gear for such a climb or a rappel descent. Mugu arch remains unclimbed."
Nils Beste

Seen from Lekh Fett. (A) Unnamed twin peaks at the head of the Bholbihan Khola, (B) Asaiya Tuppa 6,265m, (C) Abis 6,254m, (D) Lachama (a.k.a. Kubi Kangri) 6721m, (E) Kangla II (F) N3 ca. 5,850m, (G) Pratbandhi Lek 6,130m GPS.

Sungkala Topi seen from Take Khora route 2. Red2
Sungkala Topi seen from route 2, Red 4

Sungkala Topi seen from route 4, Red 3
Panorama K1N3K2 Absi, Bolbikan, Lurupa from N2 Lekh Pette

Bholbikan and Luruya Khola peaks
K1 Ridge with K2 in background

N3

K1 West face & North ridge and unclimbed N3 from Lekh Fett
K1 Ridge with unclimbed peaks around Kangla Pass and Bholbikan, Lurupya and unclimbed peaks in far distance (right end)
Ki Summit in view to the east. Kanti Himal seen in far distance

Kangla 1 climbing route
Route Gesmit Roh Final
Unclimbed peak, Lajo Dada (Langju Himal) 2017 Expedition Report
Kojuro Hagihara, Yudai Suzuki and Norifumi Fukuda
Tomon Alpine Club


Summary
In the autumn of 2017, we made the first ascent of Lajo Dada (6,426 m) in the Himalayas, Nepal. Our team consisted of two young alumni, Kojuro Hagihara and Yudai Suzuki, and a senior student, Norifumi Fukuda. This report briefly introduces our climb.

1. Introduction
Lajo Dada is one of the peaks that were listed in the “104 new unclimbed peaks in Nepal,” that were opened to the public by the Nepalese government in 2014. The unclimbed peak is located in Tsum Valley, one of the remotest Himalayan valleys, which was a forbidden area until being opened for trekkers in 2008, so we were only able to find very limited information, even for the approach route, let alone regarding the details of the mountain. In this situation, we located the peak using the Google Earth map and a 1/50,000 scale map covering the area. There was such a limited amount of information available that we were sure the trip would be quite adventurous.

1 An alumni organization of the Waseda University Alpine Club
2. Expedition Data

Name of mountain: Lajo Dada (Langju Himal)

Latitude and longitude: 28° 32'45", 85° 03'19"

Summit altitude: 6,426 m

Members: Kojuro Hagihara (Leader, 23), Yudai Suzuki (Sub Leader, 22), Norifumi Fukuda (21)
**Brief Itinerary:**

9/20 - 22, 2017 - Preparing in Kathmandu
9/23 - Driving up to Soti Khola
9/24-28 - Trekking to MuGumba (Soti Khola - Tatopani - Philim - Chumling - Lamagaon - MuGumba)
9/29 - Setting up a Base Camp (BC) at 4,650 m, and going back to stay at MuGumba (3,600 m)
9/30 - Rest day
10/1 - Climbing up to and staying at the BC
10/2 - Rest day
10/3 - 6 - Carrying some equipment and food up to 4,900 m, returning to the BC
(*) Yudai and Norifumi had altitude sickness for two days during this period.
10/7 - Setting up a Camp 1 (C1) on the glacier at 5,200 m, returning to the BC
10/8 - Rest day
10/9 - Climbing up to and staying at C1
10/10 - Fixing ropes on the glacier up to 5,400 m, returning to stay at C1
10/11 - Fixing ropes up to 5,650 m, returning to stay at C1
10/12 - Setting up an Attack Camp (AC) at 5,730 m, staying at the AC
10/13 - Climbing down to the BC
10/14 - Rest day
10/15 - Climbing up to and staying at C1
10/16 - Climbing up to and staying at the AC
10/17 - Summiting Lajo Dada (6,426 m), returning to the AC
10/18 - Returning to the BC
10/19, 20 - Rest days
10/21-25 - Trekking back to Lakuwa (including a reconnaissance trek to Ganesh BC for two days)
10/26 - Returning back to Kathmandu by helicopter due to heavy sickness of a member

### 3. Details of Climb

**Climbing Method**

We did not use oxygen equipment, high-altitude guides or porters to help us climb above the base camp. To acclimatize ourselves to the thin air, we climbed up and down along the slopes and glacier of Lajo Dada, instead of doing the same in advance in other, easier mountains. We also tried not to leave ropes for use on later occasions, even when we came across difficult part crossing crevasses on the glacier.
【October 3-7】Base Camp (4,650 m) · Camp 1 (5,200 m): Time for reconnaissance and acclimatization

We did not set up Camp 1 (C1) too early as we wished to properly acclimatize. Besides, it was quite difficult to do so as we were all suffering from some sort of sickness during our stay at the base camp (BC).

The route condition up to C1 was not bad at all. First, there was a gully on the left-hand side when looking up from the BC, so we traversed left on the glacier toward the very bottom of the gully (we called it “Waseda Glacier”). After that, we simply followed the line of the gully, as it was not covered by snow at all until we eventually reached the edge of the glacier with a two-hour walk. We then scrambled over a huge rock 20 meters in height with a climbing grade of 2nd class to step up onto the glacier and walked along the glacier with a tight rope system to avoid falling into hidden crevasses. Two hours later, we found quite a flat plateau with a little pond that was drinkable at 5,200 meters.

This was a perfect site for our C1.

Photo 1: “Camp 1 at 5200m on Waseda Glacier”

【October 10 · 12】Camp 1 (5,200 m) · Attack Camp (5,730 m): Time for reconnaissance and acclimatization

We took three days to set up the attack camp (AC). The route from C1 to the AC was in a much worse condition than we had imagined.

On October 10, we started
walking at 6:00 a.m. and moved through the glacier that had many crevasses and seracs. Of particular note was that, in the middle of the way, we had to pass through a very fragile snow bridge like a horseback, following an ice block of 10 meters in height, which seemed to have an ice grading of WI3, at 5,400 meters. We finished the first day's activity at 4:30 p.m. at C1.

On October 11, the second day on the glacier, we started climbing at 5:30 a.m. and were able to move very smoothly up to the point where we had reached the previous day, because we had become familiar with a better way to move around and were also aided by the ropes we had fixed the day before. After we climbed a 10 meter high ice wall which went up to our right along a huge ice serac, we came across a 25 meter high ice and snow-mixed section with a maximum incline of 85 degrees. Yudai led this pitch, having a 4th class (WI4) grading, and fixed a rope.
After climbing the ice pitch, we were about to lose our way on the glacier where many seracs were standing as if forming a complicated maze. Thinking our way through the situation, we eventually managed to find weak points in some of the ice walls and escape the area. There came a 10 meter high wall with highly unstable sugar-like snow, which was quite frightening and had what was likely a 5th class (WI4) grading. However, such grading really had nothing to do with the difficulty of climbing because the true core portion was projecting out over the sugar-like snow and we had to evade it with ice screws unsteadily secured on the unstable seracs. Luckily, that was the last section requiring us to climb with double axes before we reached the AC; however, at the time we climbed out of it, we were completely exhausted from the hard work of climbing and the high altitude of 5,650 meters that we had not experienced since the beginning of this expedition. Thus, we decided to leave some equipment there and returned to C1.
On October 12, our third day on the glacier, we started climbing at 4:50 a.m. and set up the AC at 5,730 meters. Surprisingly, we found a little pond covered with a thin layer of ice near the camp, which meant that we didn’t have to make water there. We still couldn’t see the summit of Lajo Dada from the camp site.

On the next day, October 13, we went back to the BC to have a rest day and prepare for our attack toward the summit.
On October 14, we had a day off to prepare ourselves for the task ahead.
On October 15, we finally left the BC aiming to reach the summit of Lajo Dada.
We left the BC at 9:15 a.m. and arrived at C1 at 3:00 p.m.

On the next day, October 16, we started climbing at 4:50 a.m. and reached the AC at 12:30 p.m.

On October 17, we started climbing towards the summit. When we woke up, the weather was clear enough that we could see a starlit sky. We left the AC at 3:20 a.m., but when climbing a 40 degree slope that was covered with 25 cm of snow on ice, we heard the slope starting to make a tremendous sound. The avalanche caused one of our members to fall around 15 meters but was not a big deal. In fact, we were still in complete control throughout the event. After the avalanche, we climbed up via an icier and steeper slope, and made it to a very flat section at 5,850 meters, which was at the very top of this glacier. We slowly yet constantly climbed up to a col named Chossin Himal and then kept climbing along the ridge towards an unnamed peak, which was also unclimbed. The ridge was mostly covered with hard snow, and there was constantly a very steep slope almost like a cliff to the climbers’ left. We then came across a steep rock section of approximately 3rd class grading, with 50 meters of relatively easy climbing. We climbed such section in a parallel manner.

Photo: We could finally see the entire mountain at Chossin Himal.
At 9:00 a.m. we reached the unnamed 6,200 meter peak, and then climbed over the peak and descended towards Lajo Dada, losing some altitude; however, the snow plateau between the unnamed peak and Lajo Dada required a lot of strenuous work as we had to make progress breaking through the 40 cm-deep snow all the way up to the foot of Lajo Dada. We actually spent around four hours proceeding in such manner before we finally reached the base of our target. Treading snow at 6,200 meters altitude was incredibly rough for our bodies which were not sufficiently acclimatized to the thin air.

After tough work making our way through the breakable snow, we were finally able to reach the bottom of a ridge, at around 6,170 meters, below the summit of Lajo Dada. We had around 250 meters of altitude left to the summit. Actually, the ridge was quite a bit steeper than we expected. Our right was completely dominated by the ice-covered rocky cliff, standing over 2,000 meters in height. If any of us had slipped without a rope, we would certainly have plunged to our deaths. Naturally, we made sure to connect securely to each other with ropes immediately when we arrived there and kept being bound tightly all the way up to the summit. In addition, the snow conditions on the ridge were quite different from what we had been expecting. We had assumed that the snow on the ridge would be extremely icy as the climb up to the AC had always been performed in icy
conditions, so much so that we could not use snow pickets. Thus, we had brought along a large supply of ice screws instead of snow pickets. They were also much lighter to carry. The snow on the ridge, however, ended up being far too soft for us to utilize our ice screws. Therefore, we were only able to set two protection runners for the full-rope length of 60 meters. It was certainly a thrilling and risky journey to the top.

From the first to third pitches, the ridge slope was 60 degrees on average, and 75 degrees at the maximum. The technical grading seemed to be about 4th class snow and ice mixed climbing. Yudai led all of the pitches. He carefully fixed the ropes for the two following climbers. The waiting time while the followers were climbing using an ascender gave the lead climber some time for rest. The 4th pitch was much tougher as the steepness was around 50 degrees and there was a lot of sugar-like unpacked snow, causing us to have hard work in breaking through the snow again. The pitch was led by Kojuro, and then switched to Yudai again. The remaining two pitches were not so steep as the previous first to third pitches, with about 50 degrees of snow and ice. Yet, we had to continue exerting great efforts because of the high altitude and our mental pressure that the leading climber should not fall at this stage.

After having endured six physically and mentally tough pitches, we finally made it to the very top of the peak at 5:30 p.m. It was a thrilling moment that can now be recorded as the first ever ascent of Lajo Dada; however, we could not afford to spare too much time soaking in our achievement due to the rapidly approaching darkness after the sun started to sink below the horizon. We immediately began rappelling for five pitches, with two of them performed in the dark, and arrived back at the bottom of the summit ridge of Lajo Dada at 9:00 p.m. Although we were completely exhausted, we still had to climb up to the unnamed peak again and to continue descending in the darkness. From the unnamed peak, we climbed down a different slope which we had not traced, as it seemed like it would be an easier descent; however, during our climb, our rope became stuck and we lost one of them. In the end, it took us a total of eight hours before we managed to get back to the AC. It had been a long and grueling journey, taking 26 hours for a round trip to and from the summit.

We awoke at midday on October 18, all suffering from sore and tired bodies. It was time to leave our AC, so we packed up all our belongings and started walking toward the BC at 1:00 p.m. We eventually arrived safely back at the BC at 7:30 p.m. and our successful journey was mostly over.
Photo: Norifumi Fukuda looking the sunrise from the unclimbed ridge, Chossin
Photo: Lajo Dada (The highest peak in the photo) and the snow plateau.

Photo: Norifumi Fukuda building a snow anchor at the bottom of the north west ridge of Lajo Dada.
Photo: Yudai Suzuki climbing the first pitch of the north west ridge.

Photo: Kojuro and Norifumi following the first pitch.
Photo: At the anchor of the 2nd pitch.

Photo: Yudai struggling with the sugar snow section at the 3rd pitch.
Photo: At the end of the 4th pitch after tough breaking snow.

Photo: Kojuro enjoying his last few steps to reach the summit.
Photo: Our delight at reaching the summit of Lajo Dada.

Photo: The intrepid trio in the tent (Kojuro, Norifumi, and Yudai from left to
Photo: We could just see Lajo Dada over the ridge from the Attack Camp on a sunny day.

Photo: Waseda Glacier, which has countless crevasses (The photo taken from the Base Camp)
The First Ascent of Lopchin Feng (KG-2) 6,805m
Autumn 2009 Expedition to the Kangri Garpo East Mountains, Tibet
Unknown Peaks in the Range

By Tim (Tatsuo) Inoue

“The White Hawk” Lopchin Feng (KG-2) was climbed by two Tibetan students, Deqing Ouzhu and Ciren Danda, on 5th November 2009, and two Japanese, Masanori Yazaki and Koichiro Kondo (student), on 7th November 2009. The Joint Scientific and Mountaineering Expedition organized by ACKU (the Alpine Club of Kobe University) and CUG (the Mountaineering Association of Chinese University of Geosciences, Wuhan) was led by co-leaders Tim Inoue and Dong Fan. 17 members, including 9 students, established the Base Camp (BC 4,320m) on the east side moraine valley of the Ata Glacier on 18th October, and returned to BC on 10th November.

Even though there are more than 47 unclimbed 6,000m-peaks in the Kangri Garpo Mountains, it is remarkable that no 6,000m-peak had been climbed until the first ascent of Lopchin Feng. Since this area is very close to the disputed border between China and India, foreigner’s entry is severely restricted. Only Kobe University received the official climbing permit. In 2003, the Kobe University party had tried to climb Ruoni Feng 6,882m, the highest peak in this mountain range, but failed because of bad weather with difficult and dangerous conditions of hanging ice collapse. In autumn 2007, ACKU and CUG sent a reconnaissance party to the Ata Glacier led by Takeru Yamada. They recognized 3 major peaks, KG-1 (Ruoni), KG-2(Lopchin) and KG-3 on the main ridge. They could not find a safe and passable route to the summit of Ruoni, but were impressed by KG-2, which has a beautiful skyline and a possible route to the summit. The altitude of KG-2 was
6,703m printed on the old Soviet Union map. But in reality, the GPS indicated 6,805m on the summit.

**Progress on the Ata Glacier**

On 18\textsuperscript{th} October, 23 yaks and 15 porters with 1,500 kg load arrived at BC (4,320m) in a moraine valley of the north tongue of the Ata Glacier. We completed the DPC (Deposit Camp 4,440m) on 21\textsuperscript{st} October, after 5 shuttle transports over 3 days by the local porters in snowy weather, while the members had opened a route to the ABC (Advanced Base Camp 5,660m) through the labyrinth of crevasses in the first ice fall with fixed rope at a few points.

![Ata Glacier & Peaks](image)

**Climbing route to Lopchin Feng**

We observed relatively low snowfall and less piled snow on ice throughout the days in the mountains in 2009. That weather looked unusual in this year compared to 2002, 2003 and 2007 in which years our parties had experienced heavy snowfall and deep snow on the glacier.

Passing through the zigzag trace in the first ice fall, a flat snow field on the Ata Glacier provided us with a good location for ABC. On 24\textsuperscript{th} October, almost all members moved to ABC.
We enjoyed the view of Ata 3-Sisters (KG-1, 2 and 3) in the deep glacier origin. They showed their flanks to the sunrise that presented to us a dramatic festival of light in the morning.

Camp-1 (C1 4,890m) was placed in the middle basin of the glacier on 29th October, where we could provide good coaching to the summit attackers. 600m of fixed rope work and cutting ice/snow in the seracs led us to the Camp-2 (C2 5,680m) on the scree of Insel Ridge.

After opening the route to the Camp-3 (C3 5,910m), all members assembled at C1 on 3rd November to form an attack operation. In any event, we were ready to ascend Lopchin Feng.

The First Ascent of Lopchin Feng

On the morning of 4th November, 5 CUG members and 4 ACKU members started from C1 with climbing gear and 5 days food. They moved to C2 in the evening. The weather was perfect, but cold
wind blew over the main ridge.

On 5th November, 5 CUG attack members started from C2 at 4:00 AM in the dark with the moonlight and were opening a route to the southeast ridge of Lopchin Feng. They fixed a 200m of rope on the way to the middle of the summit ridge. Three of them abandoned their attempt to the summit at 6,450m on the steep slope of the snow ridged face. Deqing and Ciren had continued to climb the ridge in deep soft snow and reached the summit at 1:18PM in hazy and windy weather. They made the first ascent of Tibetan virgin peak by Tibetans.

While this drama was going on, the ACKU Team established C3 (5,910m) on the edge of Ruoni Terrace near the northwest Col of Ruoni Feng. Yazaki and Kondo stayed at C3. Shigeaki Yamamoto, the climbing leader, and Shoji Ishimaru returned to C2 in the evening.

Deqing and Ciren had descended the ridge carefully to C3 where they took a rest and returned to C2 after 14 hours of work.

On 6th November, it was windy and the route was veiled with clouds. All of us stayed at camps.

On 7th November, the weather turned favorable. The ACKU team started C3 at 8:00AM. Yazaki had led Kondo and had made smooth progress to the middle of the summit ridge about 6,600m around 1:00PM. A walkie-talkie at C1 received a message from Kondo, “We made the summit.” It was 3:36PM. Kondo was surprised with his GPS receiver that indicated 6,805m.

Their descending was critical. Dizziness had overcome Yazaki and slow descending consumed time. They met darkness on the foot of the ridge where the large Ruoni Terrace expands ahead and they lost their way back to C3 in the dark. They come back to C3 at 8:00PM.

On 8th November, All attack members had come back to C1 and our first ascent drama come to the end.

**Climate Change**

Through our 4 visits to the Ata Glacier area in 2002, 2003, 2007 and 2009, we experienced climate change. One change is the Shrinkage of the Ata Glacier. We compared two pictures, the map of the Soviet Union and Google Earth. Two additional lakes were created in the past half century.
Another change was snowfall. We had predicted heavy snowfall in 2002, 2003 and 2007. The results were as expected. In the case of 2009, we did not experience such heavy snowfall. At DPC (4,440m), we had daily snowfall, but no cumulative snow on the glacier. We put tents on the bare ice. At ABC (4,660m), we measured 130 cm snow pile up on the glacier ice. But, At C1 (4,890m), we met the same conditions as at DPC. We felt hanging ice cornices on the flanks of the 3-Sisters had shrunk compared with the past years. We suppose a drier climate is increasing in southeast Tibet recently.
Unknown Peaks in the Southeast Area of the Kangri Garpo Mountains

The first ascent of Lopchin Feng provided us with many discoveries of peaks. We put numbers on the peaks in order to discuss and identify peaks. Heights of peaks are put by our presumption.

I have picked up almost all pictures of numbered peaks in this article. I will be happy if the readers of this book become interested in those new shots of the mountains.

KG-1 6,882m : Ruoni / Chombo / Bairiga

It has 3 names and different heights, 6,805m (Soviet Union map), 6,882m (Chinese map), 6,900m (estimated) and others. The local people call her “Ruoni”, but we suspect the 2003 ACKU expedition members called her “Ruoni”, and influenced the locals. A recent Chinese map has the name “Bairiga”.

The ACKU 2003 expedition had reached 5,900m on Ruoni Terrace just in front of the steep wall. We heard news from a student of Tibet Mountaineering School that a Swiss party accessed 3 different routes to Ruoni in 2005, but we did not get any information about this attempt from the Chinese Tibet Mountaineering Association. They said they gave a permit only to ACKU.

We could not find a safe and passable route to the summit of Ruoni despite 3 reconnaissance trips that were done over the past several years. There are 3 considered routes to the top. But we were too overwhelmed by hanging seracs and steep saw-tooth rocks and snow ridges.
South-east range of the Kangri Garpo Mountains

Sketch of the peaks and Glaciers in the South-east Kangri Garpo Mountains
KG-2 6,805m  Lopchin Feng

Since the peak had no name, we expected to get a local name. We asked Lhagu village people and got several answers. One person said, “White bird’s peak” but it was not confirmed and we asked the Village leader to research the name. Finally we got a proposition from them. “Lopchin” (Chinese “Lou bu qin”) is the Tibetan pronunciation written in English. It means; male hawk, brave, intelligence and university. Another alternative was “University Peak”, but CUG and ACKU preferred to choose the local pronunciation of “Lopchin”.

The Soviet Union map shows the height of KG-2 as 6,703m. The GPS indicated 6,805m when Kondo measured the height on the top. The difference of about 100m was a big surprise.

KG-3 6,726m

KG-3 was a missing peak in the Ata Glacier before ACKU identified it in 2003. Since KG-3, KG-37 and KG-5 overlap each other when viewing them from the road to Dema La; it was difficult to distinguish them individually. Only P 6,443m (KG-37 6,554m) is printed on the Soviet Union map.
The main ridge of the Kangri Garpo Mountains runs from KG-4 to KG-5 via Twins (This is not an official naming, but just a nickname for identification.). The upper plateau cut the main ridge off near KG-5. The main ridge starts again from KG-37(P 6,443m) and continues to KG-2 and KG-1. KG-4 stands on the edge of the upper plateau and is visible from Ruoni Terrace.
KG-5 is visible from the point on the road to Dema La, but many observers could not recognize it because KG-5, KG-37 (P6443m), KG-6-I and II have overlapped on a line. ACKU 2007 reconnaissance party identified this peak.

KG-6

I 6,067m
II 6,003m (Zyaddo 5,903m on the Soviet Union map)
III 6,025m

On the Soviet Union map, Zyaddo has just one peak. But in reality, she has 3 peaks. The Lhagu Glacier side has a steep rock wall and the Ata Glacier side is covered with gentle slopes of glacier fingers. The Ata-Lhagu Glacier Pass (5,500m) is located between KG-5 and KG-6-I.

KG-7 5,699m: Schuvina

While the bumpy 4-wheel drive vehicle was approaching the Lhagu Glacier Lake in the U-shaped valley leaving from the main road to Zayul, the jagged peaks in front of the main ridge of the Kangri Garpo Mountains, KG-7 and KG-6 pressed ahead. It is supposedly said that a monk at Shugden Gompa, the old Buddhist monastery near Yang Lake, named KG-6 Zyaddo, KG-7 Schuvina, KG-8 Shana, KG-31 Dojitsengza and KG-32 Tsoshi as sacred mountains. The 5,699m height on the Soviet Union map may correspond to KG-7 Minor Peak seen from Lhagu village. The highest point of KG-7 is not visible from the village.
KG-8 5,598m : Shana

KG-8 Shana is visible from the road near Yang Lake. She stands on the divide of the Kangri Garpo main ridge, but looks isolated by the Ata Glacier and the glacier of Ata Kang La. Those two glaciers have a unique topography, that both of them flow into two legs surrounding Shana.

KG-12 6,423m: Gongyada and KG-13 6,127m : Zeh

The glacier view from Lhagu village is one of the best places to see the glacier and needle peaks. Even though it is far and remote from cities and has a high altitude (about 4,200m above sea level), many tourists visit there nowadays.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>KG-12 Gongyada (6,423m)</th>
<th>KG-13 Zeh (6,127m)</th>
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**KG-22 Yuhe Kangri 6,327m and KG-23 6,010m**

KG-23 (P 6,327m) is seen on the Soviet Union map, but KG-23 (6,010m) is not seen on it. KG-23 was discovered by ACKU in 2009. A picture taken from Camp 3 (5,910m) clearly shows the peak.

KG-22 Yuhe Kangri and KG-23 were seen from the Ata Glacier. Two zoom shots were not identified when it was taken. We could identify these peaks through our check on the map and direction analysis. Mr. Tom Nakamura took a picture of KG-22 near Zayul. The new shot is on the opposite side of his picture. The picture of KG-23 is the first shot of her.
KG-24 6,150m Gheni-1 and KG-25 6,050m Gheni-2

KG-24 Gheni and KG-25 Gheni-2 are visible from the road to Dema La. We could see them from C3 and the 5,050m point on Ata Glacier.

KG-26 6,000m and KG-27 5,850m

KG-26 and KG-27 were not recognized in past years. These peaks are newly identified. The skyline ridge of KG-26 and KG-27 connects to KG-28 (Tongkole).

KG-28 5,800m: Tongkole and KG-29 5,770m: Pongle
From the playground of Lhagu Elementary School, pupils can see sharp and rocky triangular Tongkole and the white dome of Pongle. Water from the white dome grows wheat in the village. More than 500 yaks graze on the foothills pasture.

**KG-30 5,760m: Ata Kangri**

- KG-30 (5,760m Ata Kangri; left)
- and KG-8 (5,598m Shana) from Yang Lake

**KG-31 5,662m Dojitsengza and KG-32 5,298m Tsoshi**

- KG-1(Ruoni), KG-2(Lopchin), KG-3, KG-37 and KG-5 (from left to right)
- From 4,700m in the Ata Glacier
The sacred mountains, KG-31 Dojitsengza and KG-32 Tsoshi, stand on the left bank of Parlung Zangbo’s U-shaped valley. These rock pinnacles are visible from Shugden Gompa (Buddhist Temple). These names are also supposedly the names of ancient gods.

**KG-33 6,380m**

We expected an outstanding peak set off from the main ridge of the range. We found KG-33 and took the first picture of her from the 6,450m point on the southeast ridge of Lopchin (KG-2).

**KG-37 6,554m (P 6,443m on the Soviet Union map)**

A small top part of KG-37 is visible from the road to Dema La, but it looks like a part of KG-5. Many observers misunderstand that KG-5 is KG-37 (known as Peak 6,443m on the Soviet Union map.)
Upper Plateau of the Ata Glacier

KG-37 6,554m (P 6,443m)  photo taken at 4,600m in the Ata Glacier