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Morning in Nyainqentanglha West mountains north of Lhasa, Central Tibet

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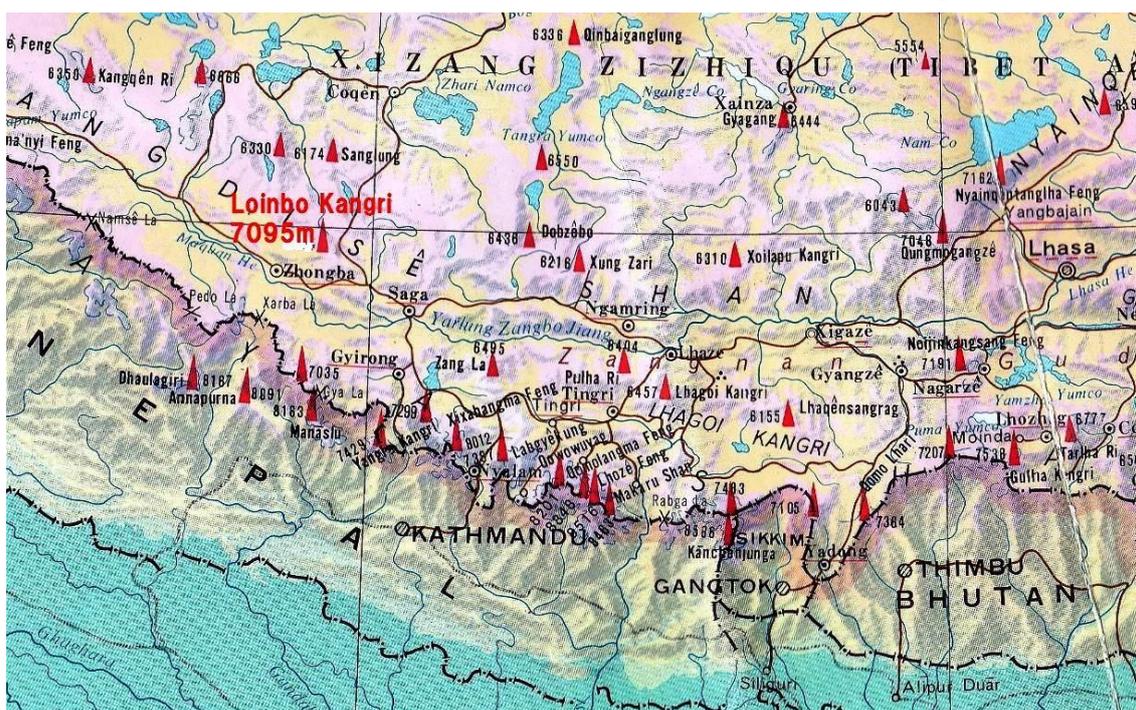
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KENRO NAKAJIMA
First ascent of Loinbo Kangri North Face
Gangdise Mountains in Central Tibet
(Translated and supplemented by Tom Nakamura)

In the fall of 2016 Kazuya Hiraide and I made the first ascent of Loinbo Kangri in the Gangdise Mountains of Central Tibet. Three weeks journey after leaving Japan till returning home and ten days climbing period are said to be rather short, but it was a most efficient expedition. Our climb was the second ascent of Loinbo Kangri.

Dear Tom Nakamura, Thank you for your news. This is indeed the first ascent of the north face proper and congratulations to the Japanese pair. I have no information of anyone visiting the mountain since Bruce Normand and team climbed there in around 2007. Best Wishes,

Lindsay Griffin, The Alpine Club (UK)



The mountain range Gangdise Shan (Mountains) lies between the Yarlung Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) and the Tibetan high plateau, the Chang Tang. It stretches about 2000 km in east-west direction and covers about 200 km in south-north direction. Due to the location of the mountain range 'behind' the Himalayan Range - separated by the Tsangpo valley - it is also known as "Transhimalaya". Towards the South the Gangdise Shan exhibits steep slopes, while it levels off rather gradually towards the north. Towards the east it extends as a separate range, the Nyainqentanglha.

The Himalayan Association of Japan first attempted Loinbo Kangri via the northeast ridge in spring of 1994 but was unsuccessful. They gave up the ascent at 6,200m. Two years later in 1996 a joint party of China and Korea made the first ascent via the northeast ridge. *Editor's note: See "Climbing Chronicle of Loinbo Kangri Massif by Lindsay Griffin" described hereinafter.*

Loinbo Kangri exceeding 7,000m in height is less-frequented but has an alluring profile, gently snow-covered and magnificent, featuring the mountains of Central Tibet. We have been attracted and tempted to do an adventurous and exciting climb to open a new route on the north face.



Loinbo Kangri 7095m seen from Chomog

On September 8, 2016, we flew to Lhasa from Chengdu. Two previous expeditions were conducted in spring and autumn, whilst we chose the timing soon after monsoon season has ceased in view of monsoon cycle and our personal convenience.

We first intended to enter the mountain from Nepal as the approach is shorter. However as the border in Zammu was still closed, we had to start from Lhasa. It was a right and non-support expedition which was our first trial in the Himalaya climbs. We hired no HAP nor BC staff, cook. Only a car driver and liaison officer accompanied us. We bought camping gear and foods locally and made cooking by ourselves.

We departed from Lhasa by a comfortable wagon with only four of us, driver and liaison officer. In two days we drove 600km to Saga on the well paved highway to the west but being always watched by the Public Security polices and car speed being checked in a certain interval. On the third day after leaving Lhasa, we arrived at a village called Gargonchang in the vicinity of base camp in the north side of mountain. A road to the base camp from here is very rough and therefore, a jeep or truck should have been necessary. But no arrangement for vehicles was possible, we tried to hire yaks pasturing here and there for carrying luggage but herders rejected to let us to use yaks as the yaks were not used for transportation. After negotiation with a chief of village, motor bikes were provided to carry us to the base camp. Motor bikes dangerously ran very fast on a rough. It was terrible indeed.



Loinbo Kangri north face, Achi Tso and glacier

We could at last have a whole view of Loinbo Kangri on the following day after having set up base camp. We felt easy knowing that the north face, our objective, looked viable to climb on continued line. Both of us had no problem for altitude of base camp and soon resumed to make reconnaissance partly for acclimatization. As the north ridge seemed to be used for descent, we stayed two nights at near 6,250m on the north ridge after reaching the highest point of about 6750m. A view from the north ridge let us know our

intended climbing line was not exposed to danger of avalanches but warned large snow shower taking place frequently. The summit was often clouded and snow conditions were unfavorable. Cloudy weather and fine weather came alternately for several days, but it was rather stable and there was no sign of onset of bad weather. After returning to base camp, we first heard weather forecast which told us that bad weather would start three days later and get stormy for some time. The present snow conditions were best for climbing. "How long does the bad weather last? How many days have we to wait until bad weather finishes and snow conditions become stable? If the time passes for long time without doing anything, we would lose a chance to attack the north face." Although I felt a bit uneasy for high altitude, there was no other choice for make headway to the north face.

Rest in base camp was only one day but a half day was spent for preparation to assault. Actually rest was a couple of hours. Though we made as much haste as possible to attack the north face, our mind remained strangely calm and we were not excited as we had have been imaging our climb on the north face

We alone left base camp on September 20. No one saw us off. We entered moraine from the right bank of glacial lake called Achi Tso and then crossed snow plateau to the north face as if detouring the north ridge. The north face looking up from a starting point of climbing was felt sheerer, steeper and overhung being different from impression when we saw it in far distance at the time of reconnaissance.

The first several pitches were steep snow wall with good conditions and no danger of avalanches, and then soon changed to perfect ice, which we negotiated using ice axes and fore-spikes of crampon. A plan to the day 1 was to climb up to the entrance of couloirs. However, as the wall conditions were quite favorable, better than we had assumed, we made headway as far as possible. Even if the surface was snow, there was solid and hard ice beneath the snow and runner was secured by screws. Where there was vertical ice, we made belay for safety, but we kept continuous climbing as much as possible almost all the way for speed-up. Since we ascended almost with no rest, our calves were extremely tired. Sunset was coming. It was a time to find a bivouac place, but the both sides of couloirs were too sheer walls and there was no safe place inside the couloirs. We felt that we got tired and action was becoming dull, but we had to go ahead patiently. After finishing the couloirs by continuous climb, the left side wall became snow ridge and a suitable spot setting up a tent appeared. The slope was steep but a tent could be placed by cutting snow.

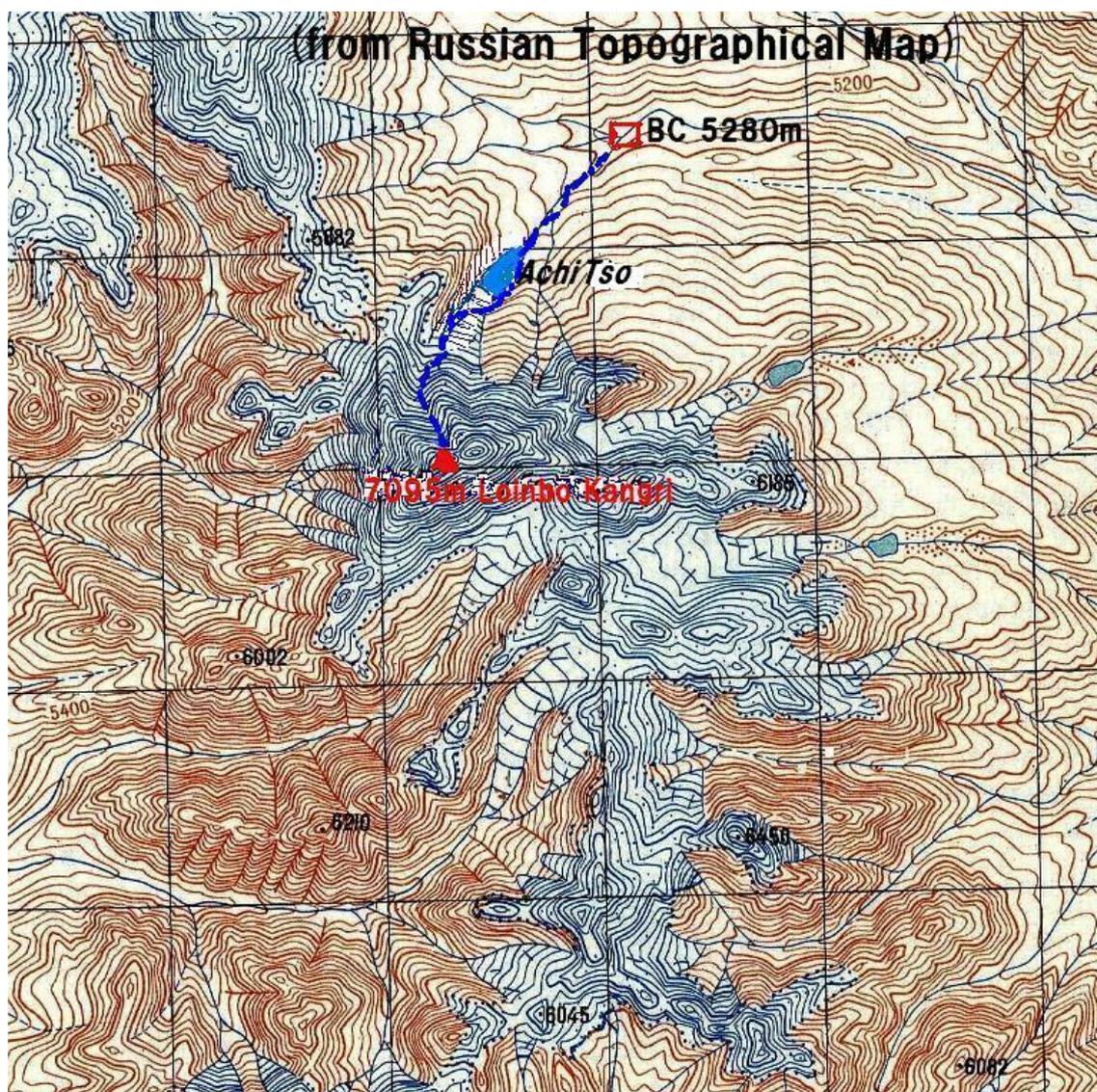
The weather was about to change. Blue sky became dark with cloud and it was thundering. Fog gradually came down and disturbed cutting work for tent site. After two hours digging work we managed to set up the tent, which was not flat but gave us a space for lying. To my worry as ever, I was about to suffer from high altitude sickness. Enough acclimatization should have been carefully made, but in this time we straightly came up to as high as 6760m with no camping in lower places. I am weak for high altitude and lose appetite in high place.

On the following day we wake up late after sunrise. It was cloudy but the weather seemed not unstable. In spite of high altitude sickness I could sleep rather well. We had already climbed the most critical part of the north face and remaining part was only snow wall. But my conditions were the worst. I could not take even drink. I was losing confidence but there was no way to return. I headed to the summit encouraging myself. The summit ridge was covered by new snow of the previous day's snow fall. It forced us to walk in deep snow. The summit ridge looked very close but progress was very slow. In this expedition Hiraide always followed my foot-steps by agreement. After getting over cornice of the summit ridge vast landscape was extending in front. Gentle 100m slope led us to the summit. We stood atop.



“I want to go down as soon as possible”. I never had such sentiment. No strength to enjoy the summit rested with me. Descent route for the summit was a narrow knife edge. We descended rope by rope using snow bars. There were cornices here and there. We carefully descended. We could return to base camp on the same day via the north ridge, which we ascended to certain point at the time of reconnaissance.

We finished the climb of the north face in two days. We believe that our climbing tactics were the best choice for the north face of Loinbo Kangri. Right expedition of only two members made it possible to achieve most efficient mountaineering in 10 days from setting up base camp to leaving the base camp. Through the expedition we recognized that the food plan is one of the most important factors for success.



Loinbo Kangri east ridge Photo: Bruce Normand (below)



On the summit



Climbing north face

Climbing chronicle of Loinbo Kangri Massif

Lindsay Griffin

A multi-national expedition organized by Bruce Normand (UK), with Brian Alder and Erik Monasterio (New Zealand), Monika Hronska and Oliver von Rotz (Switzerland) and Stephen Parker (Australia) made a number of first ascents in the Loinbo Kangri Massif, part of the Gangdise Range of Central Tibet. The area is characterized by often sharp, granitic summits and the highest, 7,095m Loinbo Kangri, was first climbed by Koreans, Bang Jung-hil, Cha Jing-choi and You Seok-jae in October 1996 via the North East Ridge. Two years previously this mountain had been the goal of a Japanese expedition. Although they failed to make much headway, they did manage to make the first ascent of Pt 6,340m, an easy but sharp peak to the east.

Up to that time the area had not received a visit by Western travellers since the days of Sven Hedin's explorations just after the turn of the 20th century, but following a reconnaissance trip in 1998 by Julian Freeman-Attwood and Lindsay Griffin, when a snow dome of 6,263m was climbed to the east of Loinbo, the same two returned the following year with Phil Barlett, Christian Beckwith, Harry and Pat Reeves to attempt the 6,530m unclimbed granite pyramid of Phola Kyung at the head of the Qulunggam Glacier, south east of Loinbo. Consistently poor weather allowed only a few lower summits of limited consequence to be climbed: Gophalo South (6,100m); Pt 6,202m, and Pt c.6,000m.

Two small summits in the middle of the range were climbed by a UK school expedition in 2003, and another British expedition, returning in 2005 for a crack at Phola Kyung was, like its predecessors, thwarted by poor weather and snow conditions.

In contrast, the 2006 expedition enjoyed very stable, if cold, weather throughout its entire stay during October. This gave deep powder on the approach to most objectives but moderate snow climbing on the peaks. The team first acclimatized by reconnoitering the drainage systems north and south of the extended East Ridge of Loinbo. A cache was placed low down on the ridge and a second, some 15km west of their c5,050m Base Camp, in the valley north of Loinbo (the main valley system here rises past a nomadic settlement to the Nyidakang La). From the latter, Alder, Monasterio and Normand made the first ascent of the second highest peak in the range, Kangbulu (aka Chomogan:6,655m). This large but moderately-angled snow dome was climbed via the South East Face to South East Ridge. Meanwhile Hronska, Parker and von Rotz climbed the East Ridge of Pt 6,340m. Parker and von Rotz reached the pointed summit

for the probable second ascent of the mountain.

The climbers then established a high camp at 5,700m on the Qulunggam Glacier, which surrounds Phola Kyong. From this camp on the 13th, Normand, Parker and von Rotz climbed the unnamed Pt 6,200m (29°0 48.327' N, 84° 38.456' E: height and coordinates measured by GPS) via its East Ridge. This is the most westerly of the five snow summits that form the southern rim of the Qulunggam Glacier. Normand continued alone up the North West Ridge of Pt 6,289m (29° 48.186' N, 84° 38.872' E). The following day Parker and von Rotz climbed a new route up Pt 6,289m via the North Face for its second ascent, and then continued up the West Ridge of Pt 6,240m (29° 48.128' N, 84 deg 39.252' E): this is 68 MAR 08 actually a double summit and both were climbed, with the lower measured at 6,237m. Four days later, on the 18th, Alder, Monasterio and Normand made the first ascent of the highest of this group of five, Pt 6,355m.

The first two climbed the North Face to North East Ridge, while Normand circumambulated the mountain to the west and then soloed the South Face. This peak had previously been attempted to within 200m of the summit from two directions by members of the 1999 expedition but serious avalanche danger prevented success. After climbing 6,355m Normand then soloed the South Face of Pt 6,240m for the second overall ascent. Finally, on the 19th Parker and von Rotz climbed the last of the group of five, Pt 6,202m, via the North East Ridge. This was more or less a repeat of the 1999 ascent, on which the climbers discovered snow leopard tracks to 6,000m.



View SW over the southern Loinbo Kangri Range seen from Pk 6355m. In the distance is the Dhaulagiri I 8167m left of centre. Photo: Bruce Normand

On the 16th Alder, Monasterio and Normand completed the expedition goal by making the first ascent of the elegant pyramid, Phola Kyung. The three reached the summit and returned to high camp in one day, having climbed the most easterly of the four snow gullies on the South East Face to reach the upper East Ridge. Five roped pitches along this led to the top (the mountain had been climbed to c6,250m in 1999 during a reconnaissance of the East Ridge). On the same day Hronska, Parker and von Rotz made the probable second ascent of Pt 6,263m via the East Face (route of first ascent) in a single day from Base Camp.

On the final day's climbing Normand made a long and solitary expedition to the unclimbed Gopalho (6,450m) further south in the main range, which he ascended via the East Face. Meanwhile, von Rotz was also making a solitary excursion in to the range of lower, rounded peaks to the north east of the Loinbo Kangri group. There he climbed a south-facing slope to the top of a summit he measured as Pt 6,044m (29° 55.216' N, 84 deg 50.946' E).

The team also inspected possibilities on Loinbo Kangri itself, noting a good ice couloir on the North Face that might go in May/June, the West Face, which may not be steep enough to be good neve/ice all the way, and the South Face, which appears to have reasonable if lengthy access but presents a big snow/ice face with few bivouac options.



Phola Kyung (6,530m) in the Gangdise Range. East Ridge in the left. The first ascent in October 2006 by Bruce Normand, up the most easterly of four snow couloirs on the South East Face and then along the upper East Ridge to the summit. Photo: Bruce Normand



Pk 6340m & neighboring summits seen from Qulanggam Gl. Photo: Bruce Normand



Pk 6240m (centre) and Pk 6355m (left) viewed from the west. Photo: Bruce Normand

KRZYSZOF MULARSKI
Advanced Attempt to Climb Lapche Kang II 7,250m
Description of the terrain of activity

Lapche Kang II, also known as Labuche Kang III East¹, is a mountain peak with an elevation of 7250 m a.s.l. According to other sources, it is 7251 m high. On a map: terraQuest 2013 "Tibet" 1:400 000 by contour lines it is only 7100 m. Its longitude and latitude are respectively 86°23'03"E and 28°18'01"N.



Members of Expedition: Jaroslaw Zurawski, Jakub Rybicki & in front: Maciej Przebitkowski and Krzyestof Mularski

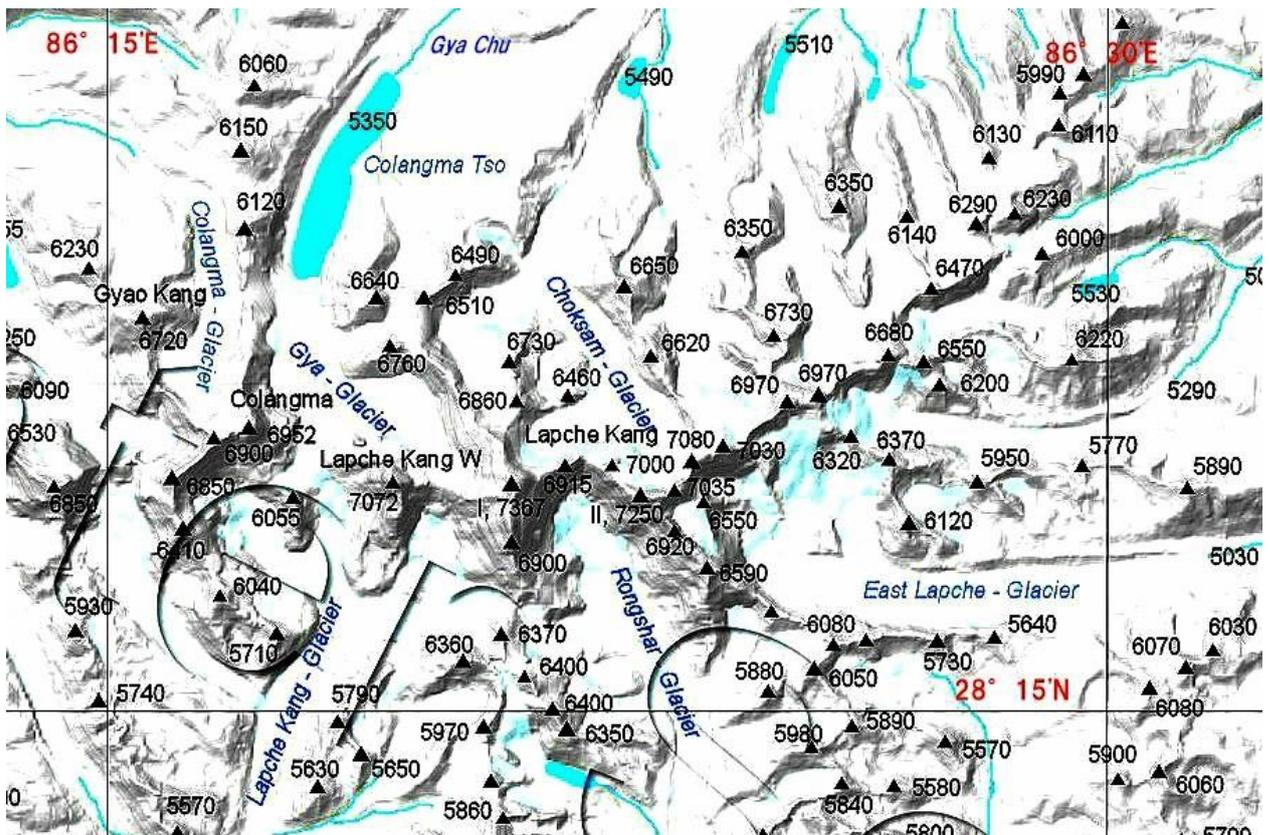
The peak rises in the mountain group in the northern outlier of the Himalayas, about 35 km northwest of Cho Oyu (8153 m), near the road from Tingri to the Cho Oyu Base Camp along the Kyerak Chu River. The accompanying map in the following article showing the terrain of our activity was developed by Jerzy Wala based on a map of Tibet 1:400 000 (terraQuest publishing house) and a map from the Internet (see references). Names and heights from the latter source were retained. Lapche Kang II belongs to a little-known mountain group in the Himalayas known as: Labuche Himal, Pamari

¹ See in particular http://himalaya-info.org/Map%20lapche_himal.htm.

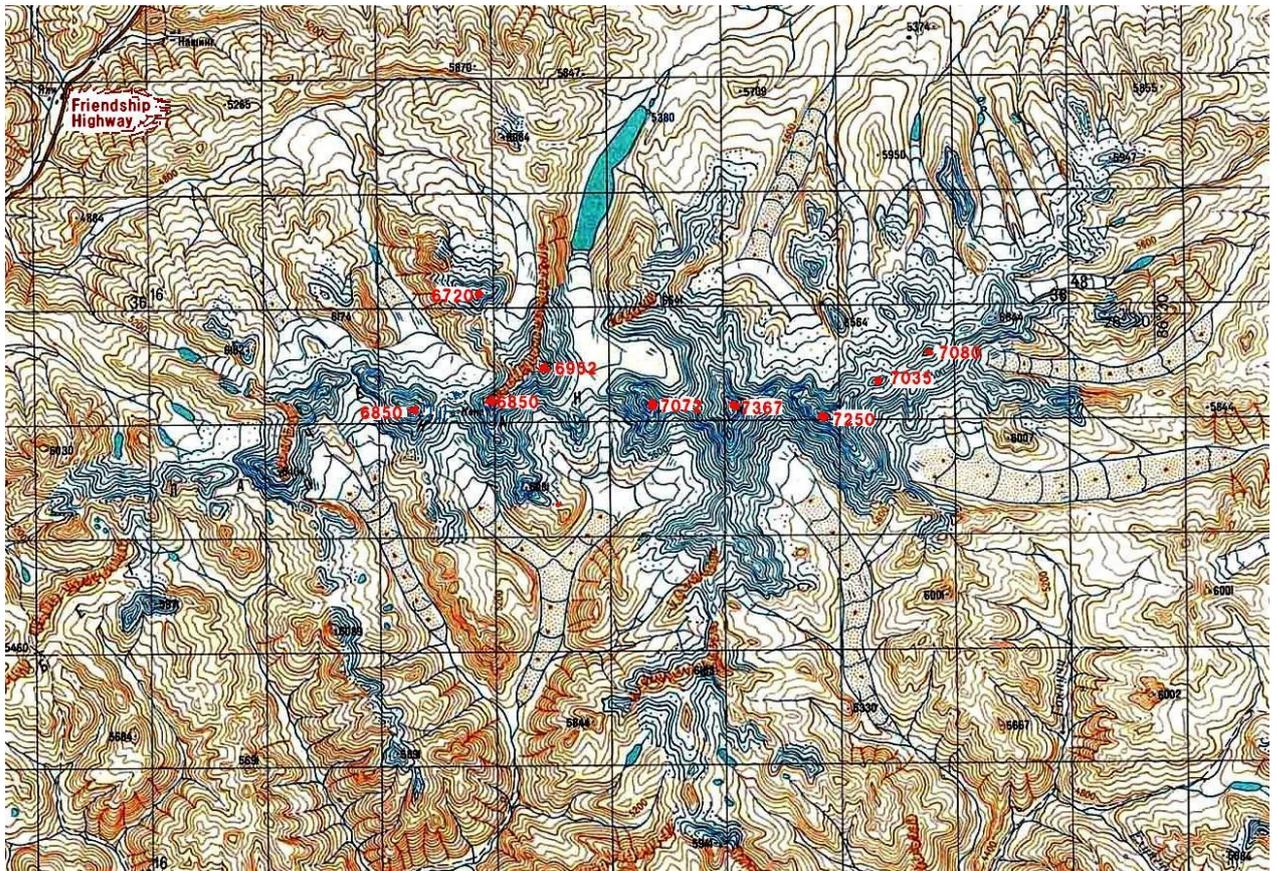
Himal and Lapche Kang.

The group extends between two large rivers: Kyerak Chu on the east and Matsang Tsangpo on the west. As it can be seen on a map which is a backing for a map published in "Taternik" magazine, the name is derived from a shepherds' settlement in the valley of the Lapchekhun Khola River belonging to the basin of the Ganges. The name "Lapchi Kang" appeared in the Dictionary of the Mountain Names of the World edited by Ichiro Yoshizawa published in Japan in 1984.

Lapche Kang II rises in the main ridge extending east-west and is the second highest peak in this mountain group. This is one of several seven-thousanders unconquered so far. The highest summit, Lapche Kang I (also called Labuche Kang I, Choksam Kang and Lapshi Gang), is 7367 m high and according to a Soviet G.S USSR map on a scale of 1:500 000 - 7282 m (all spot heights on these maps are lower than on other maps and GPS readings, eds.).



Map: http://himalaya-info.org/Map.%Lapche_himal.htm Fragment.



Map G.S. USSR, As 200 000 TINGRI 08-45-33 H-45-XXXIII

The summit was first conquered in 1987 by a Sino-Japanese expedition². The pyramid of Lapche Kang West (7072 m, variably called Labuche Kang II), was first climbed in 1995 by a French team³. So far, no attempts have been made to climb Lapche Kang II

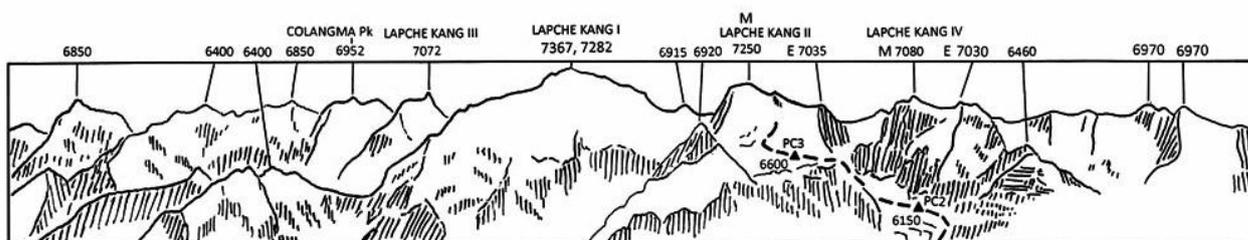
² See. AAJ 1988/62, pp. 278. Japanese Alpine Centenary 1905-2005 J.A.N. Vol. 7 May 2006 pp. 88-89.

³ M., J. Kielkowsky, Wielka encyklopedia gór i alpinizmu. Tom II. Góry Azji, Katowice 2005, p. 474 et seq. and a report of the participants in the expedition:

See <http://www.cas-neuchatel.ch/accueil/expes/labuchekang/en/chronology.htm>.

See also Himalayan Journal, 1997, p. 224 et seq.

(7250 m, Labuche Kang III East)⁴. An expedition that was supposed to attempt the summit was given the Mugs Stump Award in 2014, however, it did not take place at all⁵. In the Labuche Himal mountain group there are many unconquered six-thousand metre peak.



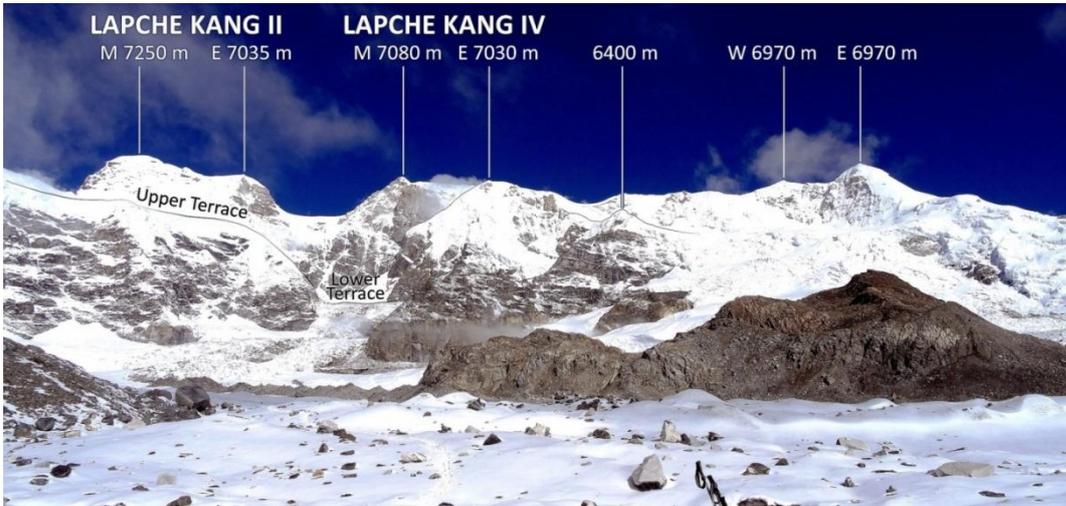
Camp C1 and East Lapche Glacier, Photo: Jakub Rybicki 2016

⁴ Information on Joe Puryear's death available on the Internet is ambiguous. It seems that the accident happened on the main summit, while the principal destination of the expedition (which was not even attempted in connection with the fatal accident) was the virgin peak of Labuche Khang III East (see in particular

<http://blog.thenewstribune.com/adventure/2010/10/27/joe-puryear-a-former-mount-rainier-climbing-ranger-dies-climbing-remote-tibetan-mountain/orazhttp://www.alpinist.com/doc/web10f/wfeature-2010-mugs-stump/4>).

The information about the death on the main summit of the mountain group was given by, perhaps the most credible, "The Alpinist" (see <http://www.alpinist.com/doc/web10f/newswire-flash-joe-puryear>). A liaison officer in the Cho Oyu BC reported that until that time 2 climbers were killed while attempting the summit by a route from the East Lapche Glacier. The officer, however, was not able to provide any details, and the expedition did not find any traces of earlier activity.

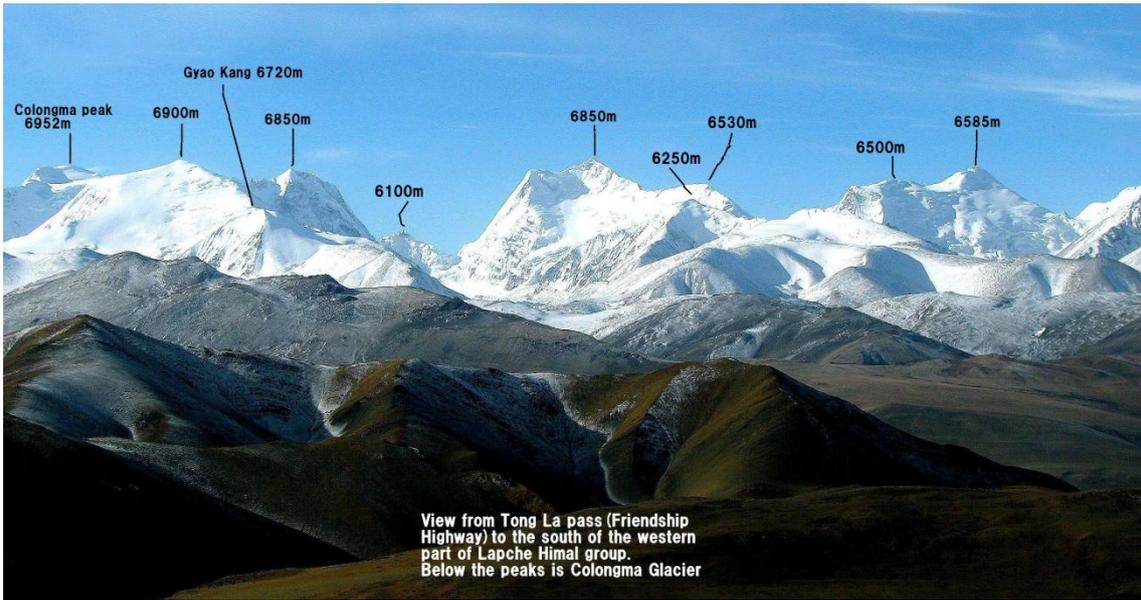
⁵ See <http://www.alpinist.com/doc/web14w/newswire-mugs-stump-recipients-2014>. Like in the previous case, there is no way to deny that "there are no reports from this expedition; neither Nepalese nor Tibetan agencies with which members of the expedition contacted for the permit heard anything about its course". It seems probable that the expedition did not take place because of the death of one of the award recipients, Chad Kellog, in Patagonia.



View from Camp C1. Upper part of the East Lapche Glacier, Photo: Jakub Rybicki 2016



East Lapche Glacier and its surroundings, Photo:Jakub Rybicki 2016



View from Tong La pass (Friendship Highway) to the south of the western part of Lapche Himal group. Below the peaks is Colongma Glacier

1. The Course of the expedition

Members of the expedition, which was a central expedition and at the same time an expedition of the Poznań Mountaineering Society (KW Poznań), were: Maciej Przebitkowski (KW Poznań), Jakub Rybicki (KW Poznań), Jarosław Żurawski ("Borsuk", KW Poznań) and Krzysztof Mularski (KW Poznań, expedition leader). Departure from Warsaw took place on 5 September 2016. A day later, the expedition arrived in Kathmandu.

According to the original plan, after completing the necessary formalities, the expedition was supposed to depart on 7 September to Lhasa, as the land borders between Nepal and China were completely closed that year. Unfortunately, despite the fact that all the necessary documents were waiting at the consulate of China in Kathmandu, the consular services refused to release the documents to two members of our expedition, justifying their decision by the fact that they had visas to Muslim countries in their passports. It was also confirmed by Polish consular and diplomatic services that foreigners holding visas to Muslim countries were not at that time and would not be in the near future allowed to the territory of China

(The expedition members contacted the Polish Embassy in New Delhi and Beijing, as well as the under-secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁶). Both the agency⁷ providing organisational support for the expedition and the Polish diplomatic services stressed that the problem was completely "new" in the sense that previously holding visas to Muslim countries had not been any problem in the context of entering China. As announced by Chinese consular services, it would be possible to enter China when the G20 summit ended, so after about 10 to 12 days. In the face of the situation, members of the expedition went on acclimatization trekking to the Langtang National Park, with a goal to climb the Yala Peak (5500 m high). The trekking took place between 9 - 15 September. Prolonged heavy monsoon rains and landslides caused that only the height of 4300 m a.s.l. was reached.

After obtaining the consent of the Chinese consular authorities to issue visas to all members and obtaining the relevant documents, the expedition, already heavily delayed, flew on 17 September 2016 to Lhasa. For unknown reasons, the plane landed in Chengdu. Thus, the expedition arrived in Lhasa only in the evening on 18 September.

⁶ We would like to thank the Member of the Polish Parliament, Bartosz Wróblewski, for help in this regard.

⁷ <http://www.walkingandclimbing.com/>

Despite the desire to accelerate the actions as much as possible, as a result of a TMA⁸ decision, on 19 September the expedition stopped in Shigatse, and a day later in Tingri. Breaking the previous arrangements, the TMA did not consent to climb on the north side from the Choksam Glacier - where the route was worked out by us based on satellite images and seemed the easiest and safest to us. Thus, we had to act on the eastern side from the East Lapche Glacier. On 21 September, the expedition was driven to the Cho Oyu Base Camp (about 4900 m a.s.l.). The next day, the members of the expedition went on an acclimatization walk up to approx. 5300 m a.s.l., staying there for several hours. On 23 September, after the formation of a caravan, a front moraine of the East Lapche Glacier was reached, and on the next day, an advanced base camp ABC (about 5400 m) was set up on the lateral moraine on the south side of the glacier. After a day of resting, on 26 September, the deposit was brought in the vicinity of a subsequent camp C1 and the next day it was installed at a height of approx. 5500 m, still on the glacier. On 28 September, all members of the expedition descended to the ABC to reach the camp C1 again the following day. On the next day they set an intermediary camp between C1 and C2 (at about 6050 m), rigging 40 meters of a mud-stone-ice wall (WI 2) along the way, and almost 100 m of further road to a plateau beneath a pillar leading to an upper terrace (WI 2, rockfall hazard). On 1 October, the team installed a camp C2 at an altitude of 6150 m, retreating forcefully to the base ABC. After a two day rest in the ABC, as J. Żurawski felt increasingly worse, only J. Rybicki, M. Przebitkowski and K. Mularski continued the ascent. On 4 October, they reached the camp C1, and on 5 October the C2. In the face of worsening weather conditions, on 6 October, the team rested in the camp C2. On the next day, they rigged a pillar leading to a terrace, up to an altitude of 6400 m (cruces: I, pitch IV, II and III, pitch III-IV, then very steep snow up to 60 degrees in some places).

⁸ Tibet Mountaineering Association - the monopolist dealing with Himalayan expeditions active in Tibet.

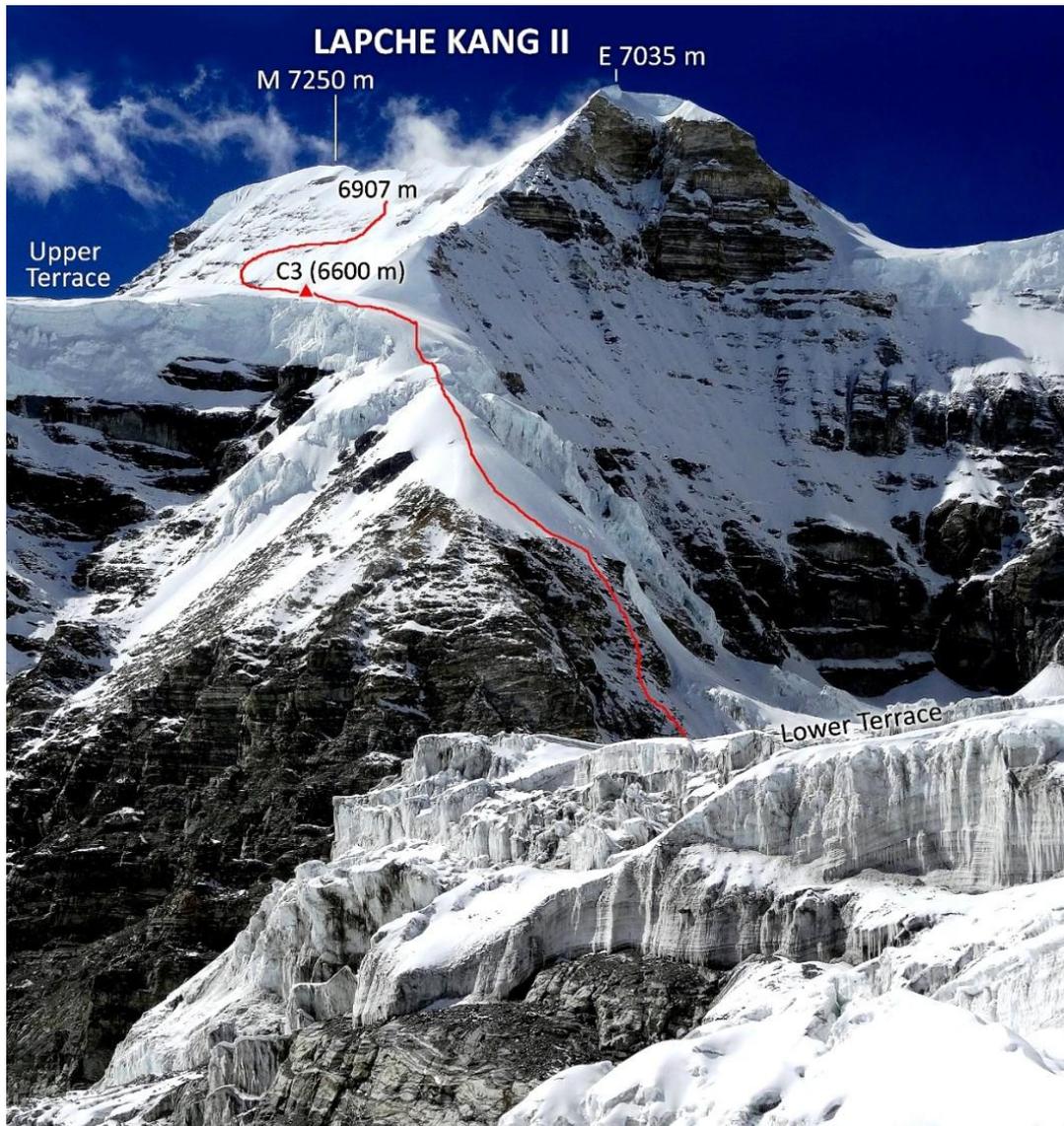


C1 and the line of Attempt, Photo: Krzysztof Mularski 2016

C2 in Lower Terrace, Photo: Krzysztof Mularski 2016



After resting on 8 and 9 October, the rigging was finished. Unfortunately, the fixed-ropes attached two days earlier had to be pulled out with great effort from under the fresh snow. On the terrace beneath the summit ridge at an altitude of 6600 m they set up a camp C3. Between 10 and 11 October, bad weather conditions prevailed, preventing any further activity. About 1 meter of snow fell and wind gusts reached more than 100 km/h.



North-East Face of Lapche Kang II East 7035m and pillar between Lower Terrace and Upper Terrace, Photo: Krzysztof Mularski 2016

On 12 October, as the snowfall ceased and the sky relatively cleared up, J. Rybicki and K. Mularski attempted the summit. M. Przebitkowski stayed in the tent, being the only support for the attempting team. The attempt, however, broke down at 6907 m according to the GPS, forcing the team to return to the camp C3. On the following day, after 19 hours of descent they reached the base camp ABC and the next day - the Cho Oyu Base Camp. On 15 October, the expedition flew from Lhasa to Kathmandu, and on 18 October, from Kathmandu to Warsaw.

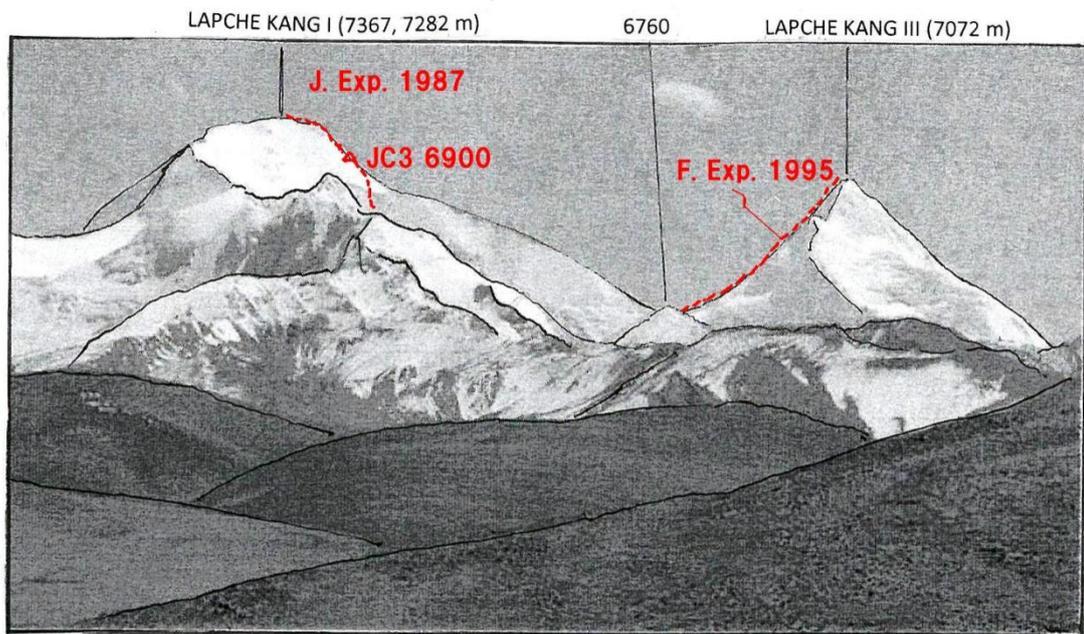
2. Conclusions

The failure of the expedition was due, in our opinion, to a series of overlapping circumstances. First of all, the actions of the Chinese authorities caused a nearly two-week delay which took the necessary time. Also, the sudden decision to change the terrain "cast" the expedition on the route far more difficult than it had been planned. The summit attempt, despite the team being ready from 3 at night, could start only at 7.30 - after the snowfall ceased and the wind calmed, which, however, increased again during the ascent (according to the Mountain Forecast, up to 34-38 m/s).

Difficulties of climbing in the ice-snow wall increased along with the steepness of the slope of up to 65 degrees. In the end, the attempting team decided that although they would have been able to climb the wall and get to the top ridge, they had no chance to reach the summit before nightfall. It was deemed that descending along the ridge with overhangs, without visibility and with elusive belaying, in a very strong wind and abseiling at night would have been to risky. The expedition showed, on the one hand, the organisational difficulties in acting in Tibet, and on the other hand, that with a greater margin of time the summit can be definitely conquered.



Camp C3 in Upper Terrace, Photo: Krzysztof Murarski 2016



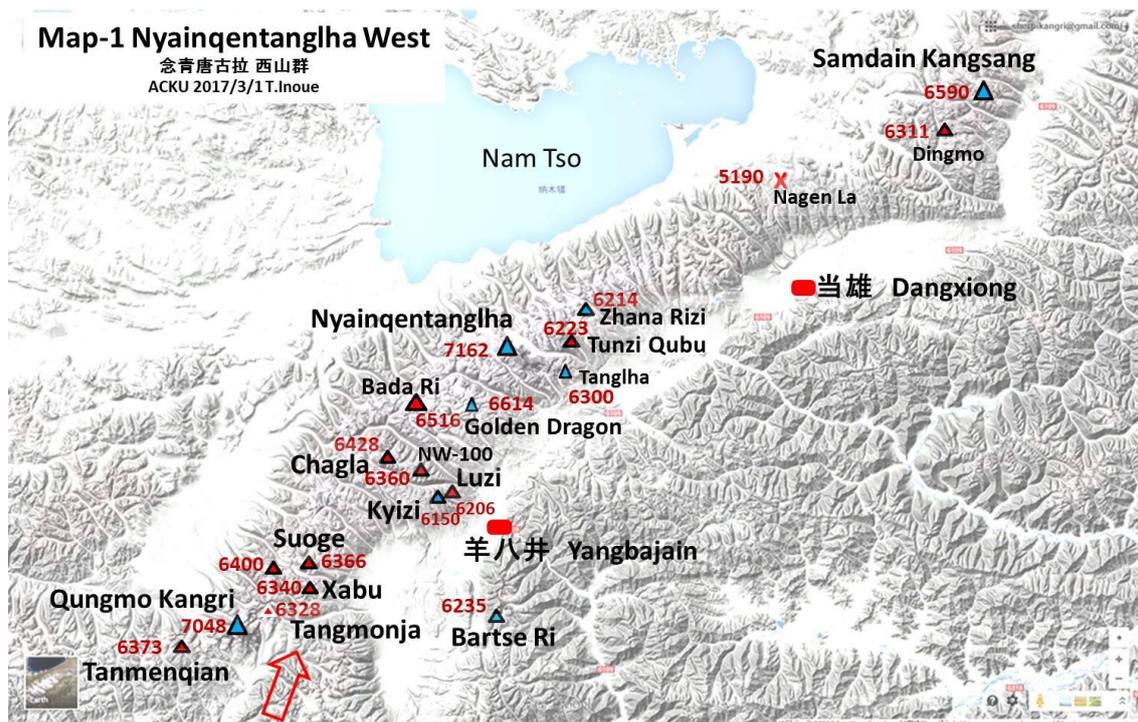
Widok od północnego-zachodu na najwyższy szczyt w grupie górskiej Lapche Himal.

View from NW, Photo: Brian McMorrow <all Galleries>> Asia>China-中国>>Tibet-西藏

TIM (TATSUO) INOUE
The hidden six-thousanders
 in the middle of Nyainqentanglha West Mountains



Fig-1 Aerial view of middle area of the Nyainqentanglha West Mountains



Remark: The red arrow shows the direction of the aerial picture Fig-1

Introduction

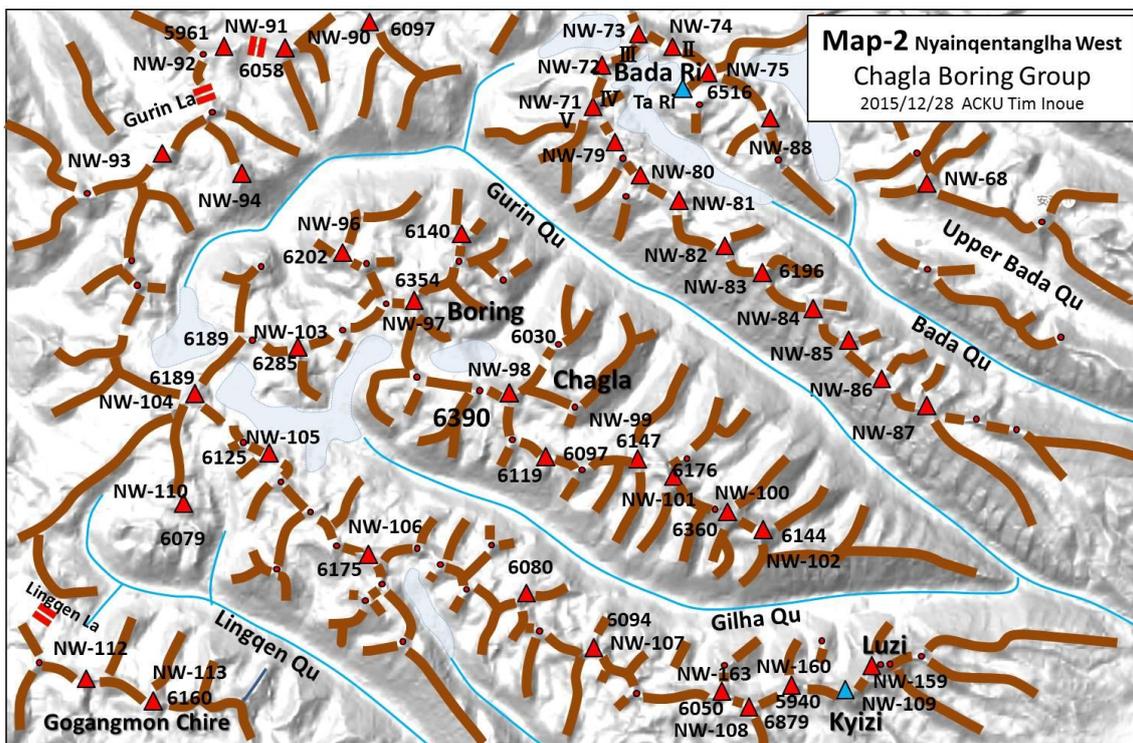
Mr. Tom Nakamura had an exciting opportunity to take an aerial picture on the flight from Lhasa to Chengdu (refer to Fig-1 and a red arrow in the Map-1) in November 2016. This picture rejuvenated my curiosity again and I reviewed my correction of peak

pictures in the Nyainqentanglha West Mountains.

The Nyainqentanglha West Mountains lies in the open area to foreign tourists. The Qinghai-Tibet Railway and the National Road G109 run together along the south-east front hill of the mountains. Many visible peaks from the road and railway are already identified. Many mountaineering expedition parties took good pictures. Including my research pictures, the outline of the mountains can be identified. But, there are still so many unexplored areas where more hard works will be required to unveil mountains between two 7000m-peaks, Nyainqentanglha Main (7162m) and Qungmo Kangri (7048m). During my research of the peaks in this blank area, I was interested in Bada Ri group, Chagla-Boring group and North-east area of Qungmo Kangri. The outline of Bada Ri group was already described on my article in the first edition of AAE. So, I want to focus on the remaining two areas in this article.

Chagla-Boring Group (Peaks on the divide of Gilha Qu and Gurin Qu)

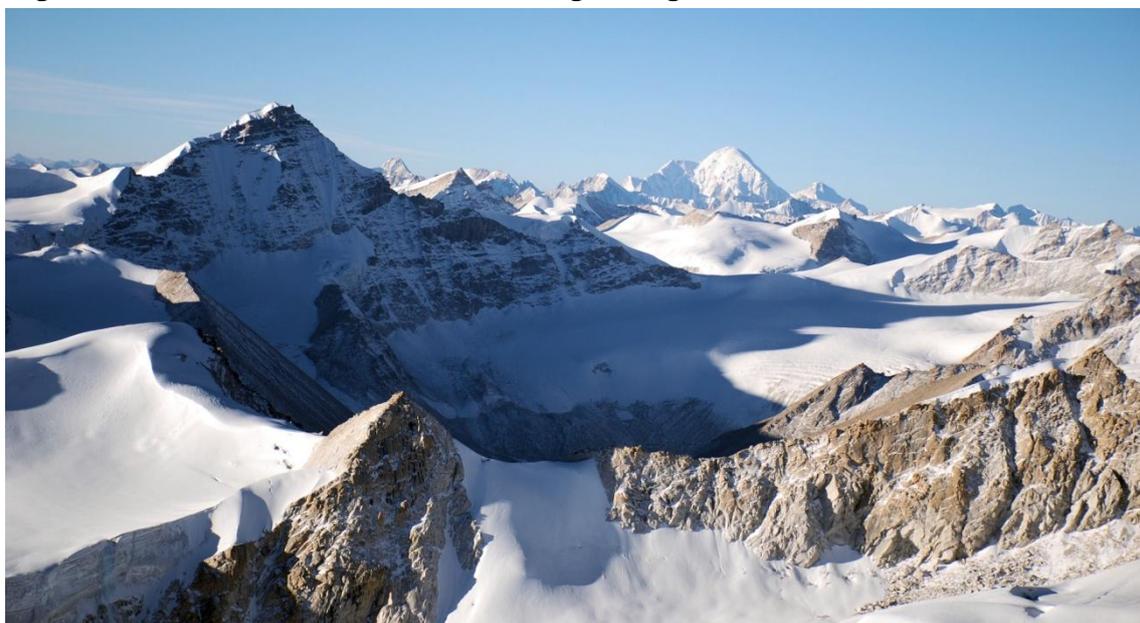
As I described on my article in the first edition of AAE, the panorama picture taken from the top of Ta Ri on 27th October 2015 has unveiled hidden south-western peaks of the Nyainqentanglha West Mountains (refer to Map-2 , Fig-2 to 6). Chagla and Boring Group stands on the divide ridge between Gurin Qu and Gilha Qu. Only the conical head of NW-100 can be seen from the road G109. Other peaks were hidden and unknown.



We found a few records of journey that gives us possibility to access the valley of Gurin Qu and Gilha Qu. Local people took trip through these valleys for their yak grazing. One interesting record said a tourist made his access by a mountain bicycle in the valley of Gurin Qu. The old trail ran through Gurin Qu and Gurin La to the north.



Fig-2 NW-100 and Peaks on the Chagla ridge



**Fig-3 Chagla(6428m, left) and Qungmo Kangri (7048m, far end)
South-western view from the top of Ta Ri**

Mr. Deqing Ouzhu joined the mountaineering festival held by CTMA in early October 2015 and he took nice pictures of Chagla and Boring Group from a pass on the ridge between NW-108 and NW-160 of Kyizi group (refer to Map-4 and Fig-4).

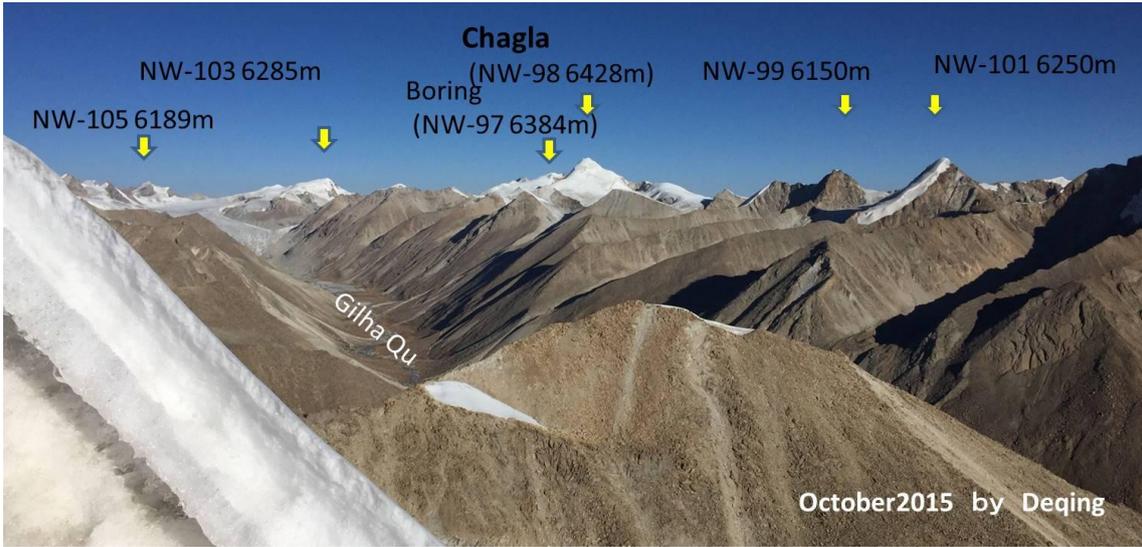


Fig-4 Peaks on the Gilha-Gurin divide ridge

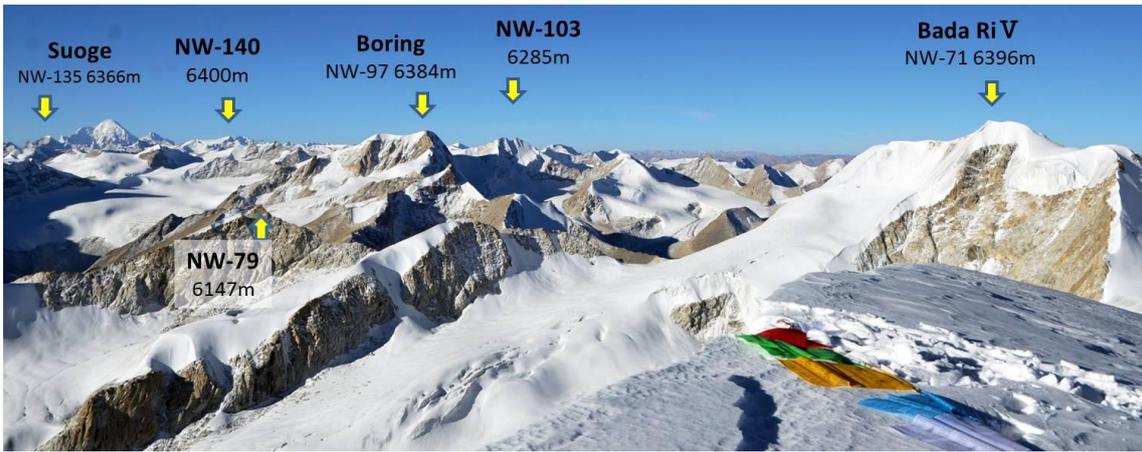


Fig-5 Boring and Bada Ri IV

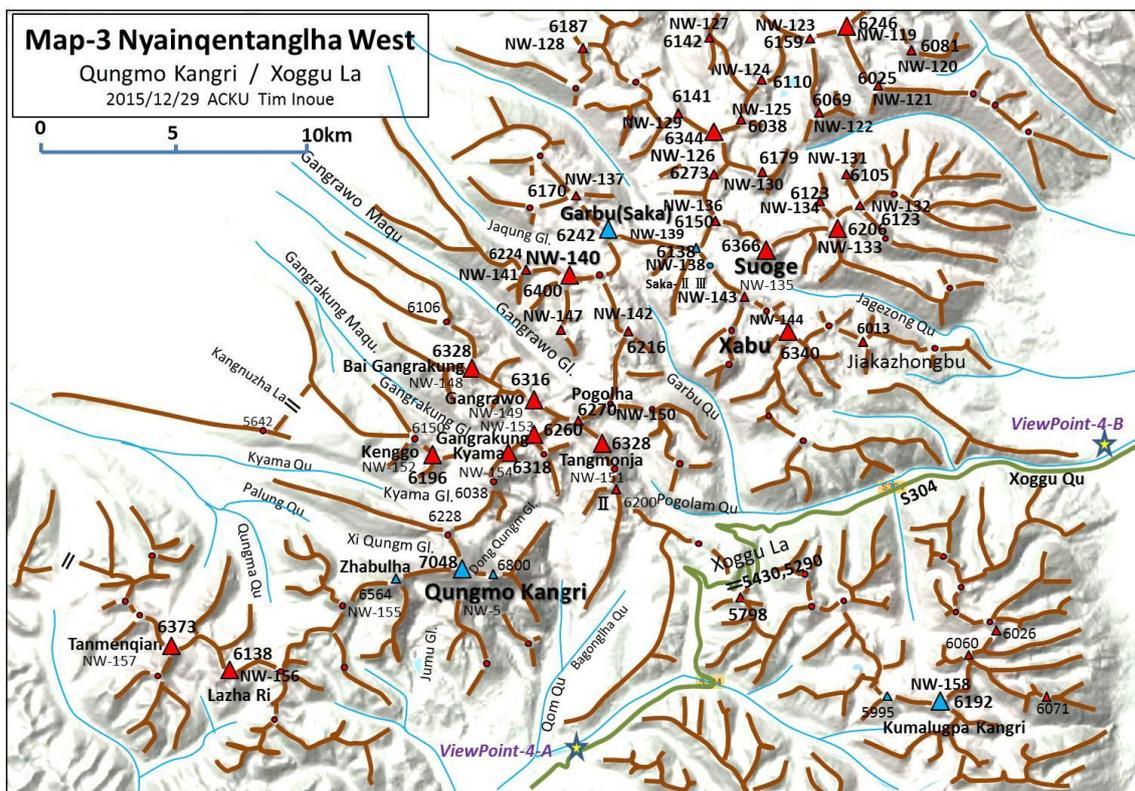


Fig-6 NW-100m from the south hill of the Road G109

The picture shows a typically pyramidal peak NW-100. I could recognize this peak in the far right back of Golden Dragon in a picture taken by Christian Haas from a high elevation point on the west ridge of Nyainqentanglha IV (South-east peak). Farther more, I found NW-100 with NW-101 and 102 in the picture (Fig-2) taken by Bruce Normand from a point on the north-east ridge of Langbu Qu. These pictures suggest me that NW-100 is higher than 6254m, the elevation was found in Google earth. I referred to ASTER GDEM data that has 6360m. I assume the elevation of NW-100 might be near 6400m. *EASTER: Advanced Spaceborne Thermal Emission and Reflection Radiometer*
GDM: Global Digital Elevation Model

North-east area of Qungmo Kangri

Pictures from Xoggu La (5290m) and Xoggula Peak (5798m) taken by the research party of Kobe University in October 2015 provide me many images of un-identified peaks around Qungmo Kangri. NW-140 (6400m), Suoge (Soge 6366m), Xabu 6340m) and other 6000m-peaks were identified. Garpu (or Saka, 6242m, NW-139) and its satellite two peaks were climbed in August 1998 by Japanese. NW-140 (6400m) is the most eye-catching and the highest peak in this area that has gentle skyline and snow covered massive body (Fig-8). Xabu (6340m) has a large high altitude glacier near the south-east face of summit pinnacle (Fig-9). The peak is seen from east on the road S304.



The north hill (a5430m) of Xoggu La (5290m) is also the best lookout point to Qungmo Kangri (7048m), Tangmonja (6328m), Kyama (6318m), Gangrakung(6260m) and other peaks. Qungmo Kangri is an independently massive peak. Tourists can clearly recognize her from Yangbajain area. In 1996, Chinese and Korean joint team made the first ascent of Qungmo Kangri from the south ridge. Japanese two parties succeeded the second (1997) and third (1999) ascent of her. The climbing route was through the south ridge same as the first ascent. Austrian climber, Christian Haas made the fourth ascent as solo one-day climb in 2005.

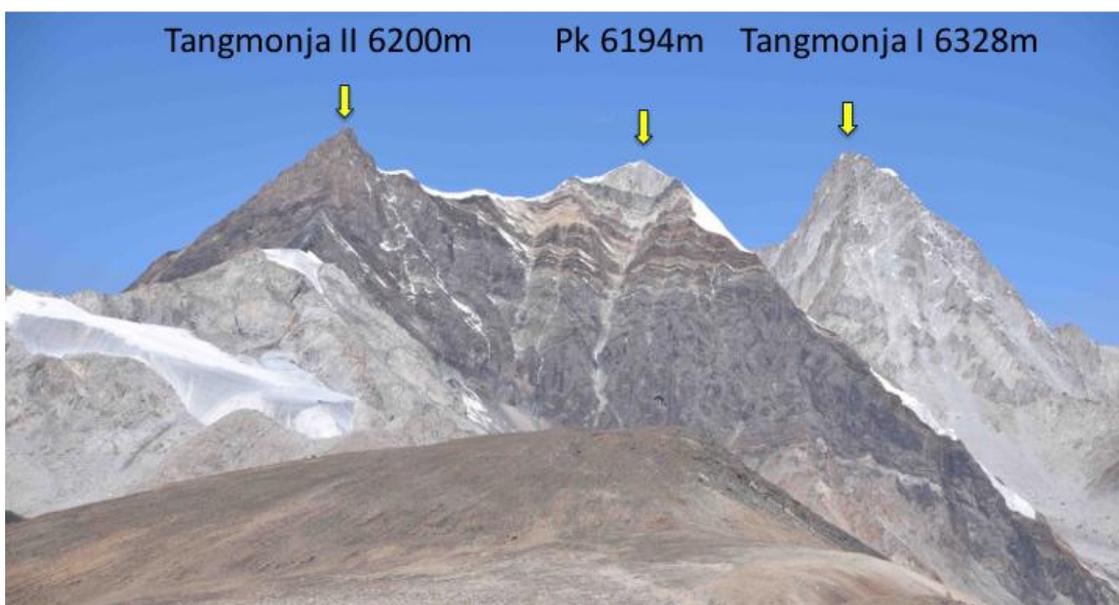


Fig-7 East face of Tangmonja 6328m(NW-151) (from North hill of Xoggu La)

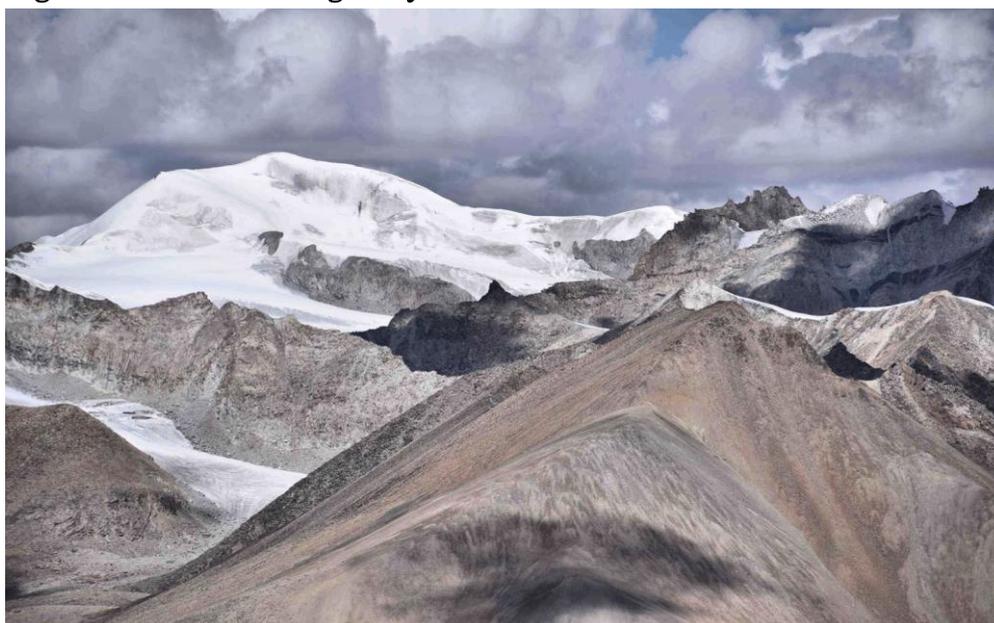


Fig-8 NW-140 6400m from Xoggu La Peak



Fig-9 Xabu 6340m from north hill of Xoggu La



Fig-10 South face of Suoge 6366m from north hill of Xoggu La



Fig-11 East face of Suoge 6,366m

The east face of Suoge can be seen in the deep valley of Jagezong Qu. In September 2013, Japan Unclimbed Peak Club went in to Jagezong Qu and tried to climb Suoge up to 6,100m. The North-west ridge (the left sky line of the picture Fig-10) was their summit push line where good snow-covered ridge continues to the top.

Kyama Ri (NW-154 6318m) and its' northern peak, Gangrakung (NW-153 6260m) are both rock peaks and look very steep (Fig-12, 13). From Qungmo Kangri, the rocky ridge and some six-thousanders like Kyama Ri continue to the north.

Tangmonja I (NW-151 6328m) with two satellite peaks (Fig-7) stand in the deep end of Pogolam Qu. The rocky needle peak of Tangmonja I is distinguish herself in the sky.

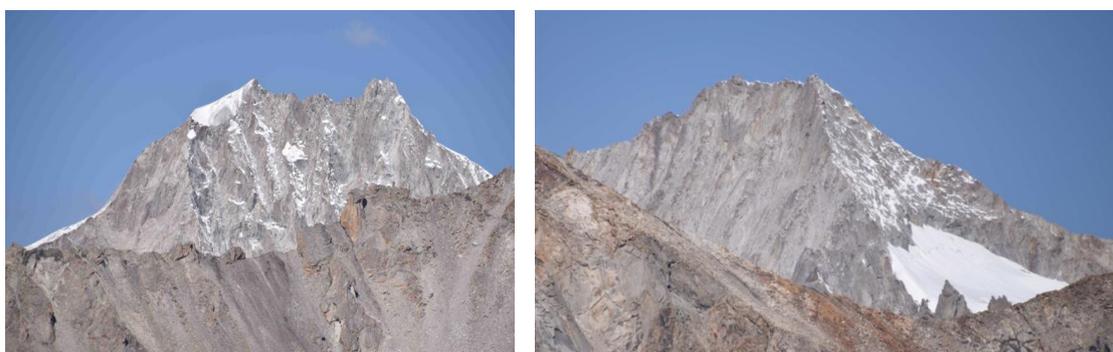


Fig-12 Kyama Ri (NW-154) 6318m from Xoggu La Peak (left)

Fig-13 Gangrakung (NW-153) 6260m from Xoggu La Peak (right)



Fig-14 Garbu (or Saka NW-139 6248m: climbed) from Xoggu La Peak

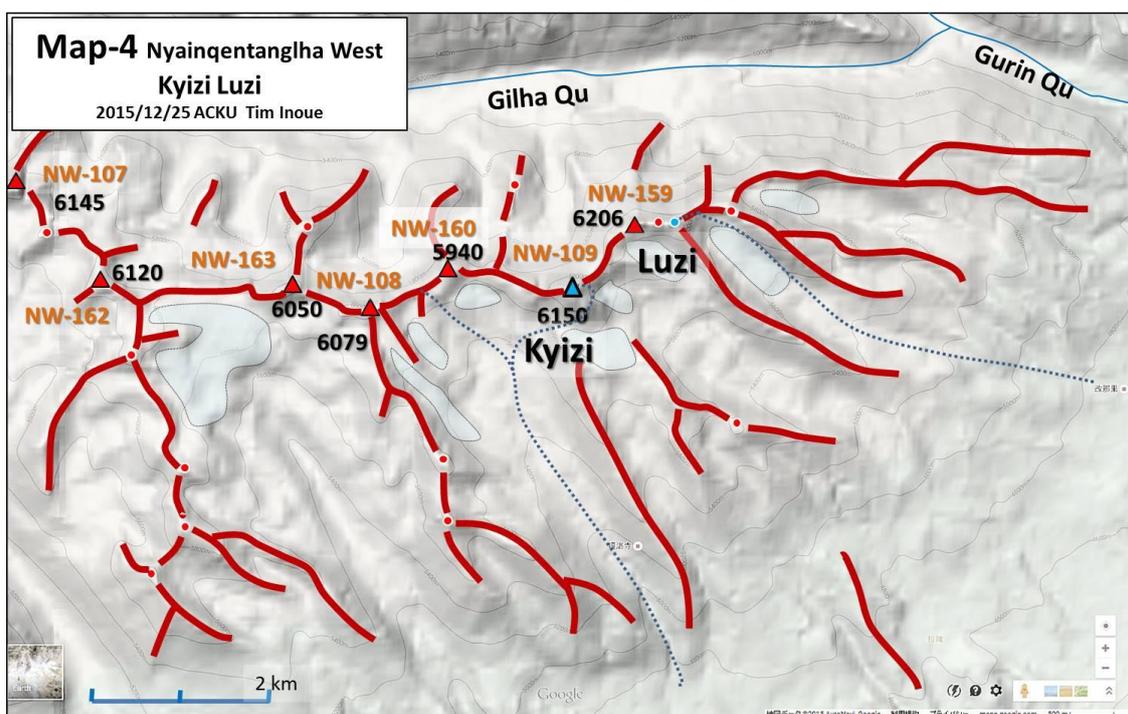
Some other unclimbed peaks were recognized in the north from the top of Xoggu La Peak (5798m) in addition to the peaks recognized from the north hill of Xoggu La (5430m). The west face of Garbu or Saka (NW-139 6248m) looks pyramidal with ice cap.

The first ascent of Kyizi and Luzi

I have brought up a few questions about this mountain group. The first question is names and locations. Mr. Janusz Majer and Mr. Jerzy Wala issued a study report “Nyainqentanglha-West Mountains 2010”. They put the name of Luzi on the peak NW-107 (6145m in the Map-4) in their report. Mr. Ohta (Japan Unclimbed Peak Club) described in his internet report that he made the first ascent of Luzu (Luzi 6206m) in September 2011. I had analyzed his sentences and pictures of climbing and then I concluded that he had reached the the east end peak out of 3 pinnacles. He believes Luzi location is NW-159 position in the Map-4.

CTMA and members of “Tibet Mountaineering School and Team” has often climbed the dome shape peak NW-109 as Kyizi (6150m). They said NW-159 should be Luzi (6206m). Mr. Ciren Danta who is an officer of Tibet Sports Department and a professional climber said that NW-109 is Kyizi (6150m) and NW-159 is Luzi (6206m). I took the identification by Danta in this report. Mr. Majer and Mr. Wala put the name of Kyizi (6206m) on NW-109. The names of Kyizi and Luzi come from “Kyi = dog” and “Lu = sheep” with “Zi = person who controls animal”. Kyizi means “dog trainer” and Luzi means “shepherd”. Tibetan in this district often put animal name on mountain.

The second question is the first ascent of peaks. I have no question that Kyizi was climbed many times. But, I could not get any evidence of the first ascent of Kyizi. According to the Internet article, Japanese party climbed Kyizi in 1995. I asked CTMA and Tibet Mountaineering School, but I did not get any good answer.



I have one record that Nagano Prefecture Mountaineering Association had a Joint expedition with CTMA on August 16th, 1997. They had reported they climbed Kizu (Kyizi 6079m). A picture in that report targeted the climbing route from the top down to the East Ridge appears 3-pinnacles of Luzu = Luzi (6206m). We got a very similar picture that Danta took it in May 2010. It is obvious that Nagano team climbed Kyizi comparing with those two pictures.

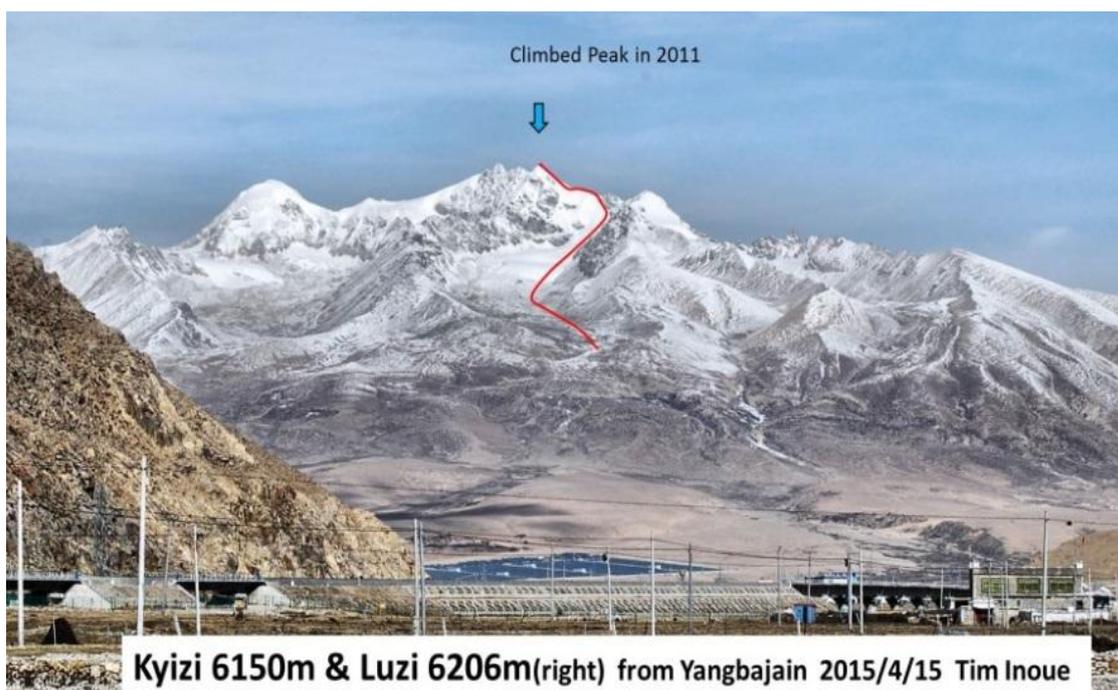


Fig-15 Kyizi 6150m (left) & Luzi 6206m. The line shows climbing route to the top of Luzi-III The main Peak of Luzi is still unclimbed.

Referring to the internet, Mr. Masahide Ohta described that he made the first ascent of Luzu I (6206m) on September 13th, 2011. According to his climbing explanation, I could follow his climbing line as shown in the picture (Fig-15 and 17). From the south foot of this mountain, the East-end peak-III looks the highest peak. I have other good pictures captured 3-pinnacles clearly. As my conclusion, the west end peak is the highest. Mr. Ohta climbed Luzi III (a 6150m).



Fig-16 Luzi & Kyizi Group (E face) (Picture: Kobe Univ. expedition in 2014)

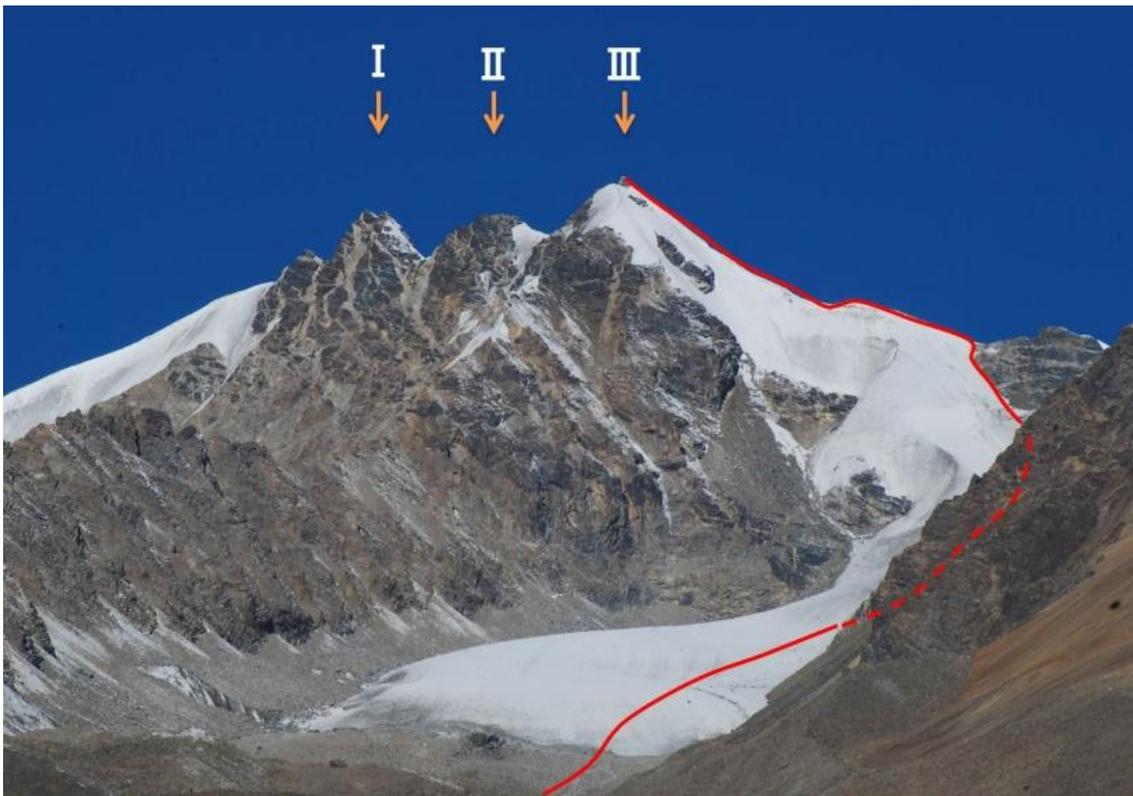


Fig-17 Climbing line of Luzi (south face) by Mr. Ohta in 2011 (Picture: Kobe Univ. expedition in 2014)



Fig-18 3-peaks of Luzi From Bada Ridge 5,500m (north-east face ; Picture: Kobe Univ. expedition in 2015) The main peak of Luzi is still unclimbed.

In the Chagla-Boring Group, there are no climbed Six-thousanders.

China Government had reinforced the regulation in Tibet recently. Foreign mountain climbers including trekkers cannot enter the restricted area in Tibet such as Nyainqentanglha East Mountains, Kangri Garpo Mountains and the border mountains of Bhutan except Himalaya range and Nyainqentanglha West Mountains.

There are many un-climbed Six-thousanders in the Nyainqentanglha West Mountains fortunately. It looks climbing paradise today if you want to organize expeditions.

KIM CHANG HO (Translation: Oh Young-Hoon)
“Korean Way” on Gangapurna and Gangapurna West, Nepal
Awarded “11th Piolets d’Or Asia 2016”

What to do next? – This question lingered in my mind after I completed my oxygenless journey on all the fourteen eight-thousanders. Like in everyone else’s life I couldn’t expect anything like a compass that should consistently keep me informed of what to rightly follow into the unknown future. After all, however, I sought to consult my lifelong passion, namely, the spirit of mountaineering in its authenticity. The spirit taught me some principles: to overcome one’s own limit, to pursue uncertainty, and to explore beyond the end of road. From this I eventually devised the “Korean Way Project.” This project is to create natural lines on unclimbed peaks and walls, assisted by my experiences on high mountains. In that, climbers ought to climb with no supplemental equipment or other human supports except for their own manpower and sole responsibility.

The project includes a specific set of criteria determining peaks to climb. Can it be a valuable contribution to explore to reach the base of the mountain? Can a climb be done in a manner appreciative of the local ideas on the mountain? Is the climbing route a natural and smart line? Considering all this, for the first aim of the project I decided a direct route on the south face of Gangapurna and, to its west, a route on Gangapurna West (which is also called “Lachenal”).



I invited two of my friends to this expedition: Choi Seok-Mun and Park Joung-Yong. Seok-Mun has climbed with me several times beyond mountains in Korea, including an expedition to five peaks in Pakistan in 2001, one on Torres Centrale del Paine (2,800m) in Patagonia in 2007, and the first ascent of Batura 2 (7,762) in Pakistan, which was the highest peak among those unclimbed until then. Joung-Yong, too, was a good friend of mine – we were on a new route on the south face of Lhotse (8,516m) in 2004 and on Makalu (8,463m) in 2008.

We departed from South Korea on September 12. It proved to be never easy to reach the mountain: at the swollen Modi khola (river) we had to set up a 10m makeshift bridge; at a small-yet-violent stream under the glacier at Glacier Dome (7,193m) we fixed up a Tyrolian bridge to assist porters to cross. Finally, we set up our base camp (4,034m) near a stream that flows from Annapurna East Glacier.



Modi Khola: to Base Camp

South Face of Gangapurna West

Gangapurna West is one of the peaks the Government of Nepal officially allowed to climb since 2014. It was perhaps called Asapurna once in the past as documented in an outdated map. No climbing attempt on the mountain has been reportedly made

before us.

The trickiest part of the entire trip was to find out the best approaching route to the foot of each wall. It was one of our goals that we wanted to attain as we climb Gangapurna West.



South face of Gangapurna West 7140m route-topo

On October 5, we departed the base camp with a plan of five-day trip. Climbing on a small ridge south-south-east from Gangapurna West led us to the first bivy point (5,806m). The next day, we climbed steeper snow slopes and seracs. At the second bivy at 6,200m we spent two nights to find a route through a complicated glaciated terrain above. Usually, after around 10pm snow fell and it got cloudy. At 1:30am on October 8, we finally started to climb to the top. We climbed fast, being roped each other and belaying occasionally on a steep face.

Seok-Mun and Joung-Yong looked so drowsy, slow in climbing, due to insufficient acclimatization. The summit ridge was not very far. Then, Joung-Yond decided to stop climbing, saying he would wait there for us returning from the top. Leaving him, Seok-Mun and I climbed three pitches more to reach the summit ridge. The top was only 100m away from us. We stopped, however, and briefly shared thoughts, figuring between “an unsuccessful attempt” and “a colleague’s safe return.” An ascent without

colleagues was meaningless to us, we shared; all expedition must be “from home to home.” Leaving the top untraveled, not our colleague, we started to rappel and safely returned to the last bivy place.

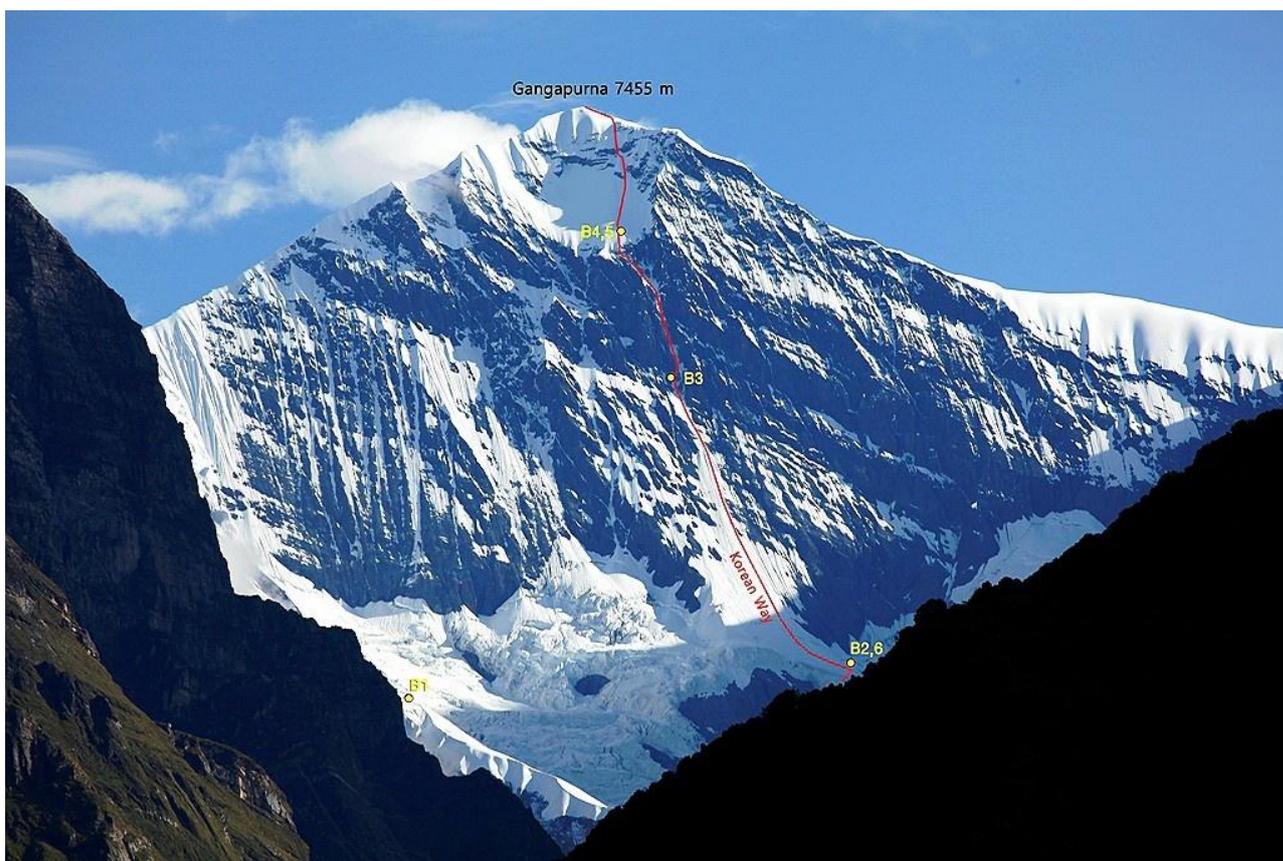
South Face of Gangapurna

I first saw the South Face of Gangapurna at the 1964 issue of *The Alpine Journal*. This rare photography was taken from the air by the Swiss cartographer Toni Hagen in 1952. Since a German expedition made the first ascent via the south face / east ridge in 1965, by the year of 2015 twenty four teams attempted climbing on the mountain, eight reaching the top.

Notably, five routes are established: the west ridge by Japanese in 1971, the south face by Canadians in 1981, the north face / northeast ridge by Yugoslavians in 1983, and the north face by Yugoslavians in 1989. Koreans made three attempts since 1984; four Koreans successfully reached the top through the German route in the spring of 1986.

The Canadians in 1981 had to place four camps before reaching the foot of the South Face. This was to climb up to our first bivy place on Gangapurna West to traverse toward the east onto the upper part of the glacier where another traverse will lead into the proper face. Fortunately, we were able to find out and follow a faster way to the face. We also decided to climb *direttissima*, differently from the Canadians who climbed to the right of the rock-band in the middle of the face. The unstable weather kept us concerned.

This season's weather was quite distinct compared to previous years. Monsoon did not go away, drizzling rain on Base Camp, until the Dashain festival period began on October 12 which normally announces the embark of a dry season. Only then we could locate ice was well formed to link throughout the planned route, which is indeed rare in spring seasons. After taking a good rest at Machapuchare Base Camp, on October 16 we started from our base camp with a seven-day plan of climbing the 3,400m altitude difference to the top. We carried a 8-10kg pack each, with two 7.5mm-60m ropes, six screws, three pickets, one two-person tent, a short pad, a gasoline stove, food and others.



South face of Gangapurna 7455m, route-topo

The first bivy was on 5,806m, the second on 6,000m just below the face. On the third day, we three simul-climbed the lower part of the south face and belayed at occasional ice. That night was miserable. It was cold as low as -20°C , sitting on a chopped ice under a rock at 6,800m. The next day we climbed nine pitches of a mixed terrain with thin ice on a steep rock. Climbing through a narrow icefall in a couloir between the huge rock walls led us to a low-angle slope toward the top. Despite a thundering wind never stopped blowing hard and pulling us away from the wall throughout the night, we enjoyed for being able to lie down in the tent placed in the middle of the slope around 7,100m. Yet there was no food left except hot water.

We reached the top the next day, October 20. We were just thankful to each other for being there together. And, we asked the goddess of Ganga to cleanse our collective sinful desire. It marked an end that completes a Korean Way Project and that finishes a rise into the myth. For the next two days, we safely climbed down through the 1,500m wall, via the same climbing route, using natural protections, snow bollards, and abalakov Anchors. What we left on the mountain was Joung-Yong's 10kg body weight, Seok-Mun's 6kg, and my 8kg, along with two snow pickets. The new route on the south

face of Gangapurna was a way of suffering we climbed by burning each of our bodies. With a great memory of 48 days we safely returned to each of our families.



Gangapuruna: (Above) left – climbing day 3, right – bivy 3 (Below) climbing day 4



Gangapurna: climbing toward the summit ridge



Gangapurna: approaching to the summit



Gangapurna: descending on the wall



On the summit of Gangapurna



Climbing gear

Expedition summary

- Name of the expedition: Korean-way Gangapurna & Gangapurna West Expedition, 2016
- Peaks: Gangapurna (7,455m), Gangapurna West (7,140m)
- Climbers: Kim Chang-Ho, Choi Seok-Mun, Park Joung-Yong
- Period of the expedition: September 12, 2016 – October 29, 2016 (48 days)

Gangapurna West

- Period of the climb: Oct. 5 – 9 (5 days)
- Route: A new route on South Face (100m short of the top)
- Altitude difference: 3,100m (BC 4,034m – Summit 7,140m)

Gangapurna

- Period of the climb: Oct. 16-22 (7 days)

- Route: “Korean Way” – a direttissima (direct route) on South Face, reaching the top at 12:45pm local time, Oct. 20.
- Altitude difference: 3,400m (BC 4,034m – Summit 7,455m)
- Difficulty: ED+

Members

Kim Chang-Ho (b. 1969)

- Instructor of Mountaineering Training Institute Of K.A.F.(Korean Alpine Federation)
- Summited all the fourteen mountains over eight-thousand meters
- First ascent, a variant new route on the Rupal Face of Nanga Parbat in Pakistan, 2005
- First ascent, Batura 2 (7,762m) in Pakistan, 2008
- First ascent, Himjung (7,092m) in Nepal, 2012
- Solo first ascent on four peaks of 6,000meters in Pakistan, 2003

Choi Suk-Mun (b. 1974)

- UIAA International Route Setter
- First ascent, a variant new route on the north face of Mt. Hunter, Alaska, 2012
- First ascent, Batura 2 (7,762m) in Pakistan, 2008
- Torres Centrale del Paine (2,800m) in Patagonia, 2007

Park Joung-Yong (b. 1976)

- A member of the Korean sport climbing national team, 2001
- Attempt on a new route on South face, Lhotse (8,516m) in Nepal, 2005
- Ascent on Makalu (8,463m) in Nepal, 2008
- Solo first ascent, new route at North face of Kwangde (6,187m) in Nepal, 2009

TSUNEO SHIGEHIRO
First Ascent of Nangamari II 6,029m Eastern Nepal
JAC Kansai 80th Anniversary Expedition 2016
(Translated and supplemented by Tom Nakamura)

Editor's Note:

This is not a record of outstanding extreme climbs but a story to have successfully led all the recruited members to the first ascent of 6,000m peak in the Kangchengjunga Region in easternmost Nepal, and homage paid to late Tamotsu Ohnishi, a pioneer of explorations in the Nepal Himalaya.



Expedition leader, Tsuneo Shigehiro, in the centre

Road to Nangamari

The Kansai Section of the Japanese Alpine Club (JAC) planned to send an expedition to the Himalaya as one of the major events to commemorate its 80th anniversary in 2016. In 2005 the Kansai section dispatched an academic mountaineering team to western

Tibet. They made the first ascent of the north ridge of Pachyung Ham 6,529m and the southeast face of Gyang Dzong Kang 6,123m as well and further successfully conducted a survey for unveiling the mystery of a Japanese Monk Ekai Kawaguchi's route to have crossed the border in disguise heading for forbidden Tibet. (See the Japanese Alpine News vol. 7, May 2006, page 138-148, R. Takayama & T. Ohnishi "The Footsteps of Ekai Kawaguchi – a Japanese Monk and Explorer")



KAWAGUCHI, Ekai (1866 – 1945)

In 1897 Kawaguchi went to India. At Darjeeling he learned the Tibetan language under Sarat Chandra Das. Six month later he left there, pretending to return to Japan. He secretly entered Nepal, where he tried to find a suitable route to Tibet. In 1900 he overcame many a difficulty and successfully entered Tibet over the snow-covered Himalayan passes all alone. He was cautious enough to avoid trekking directly to Lhasa, and started a pilgrimage to sacred places in Western Tibet - Lake Manasarowar and Mt. Kailas, par excellence. Then he walked towards the east. In March 1901 he finally arrived in Lhasa via Shigatze. He identified himself as a Chinese monk and was admitted to Sera Lamasery. He earnestly studied Tibetan Buddhism as well as sutras, and his simple gratuitous medical help earned him fame in

Lhasa. He was even received in audience by Dalai Lama XIII.

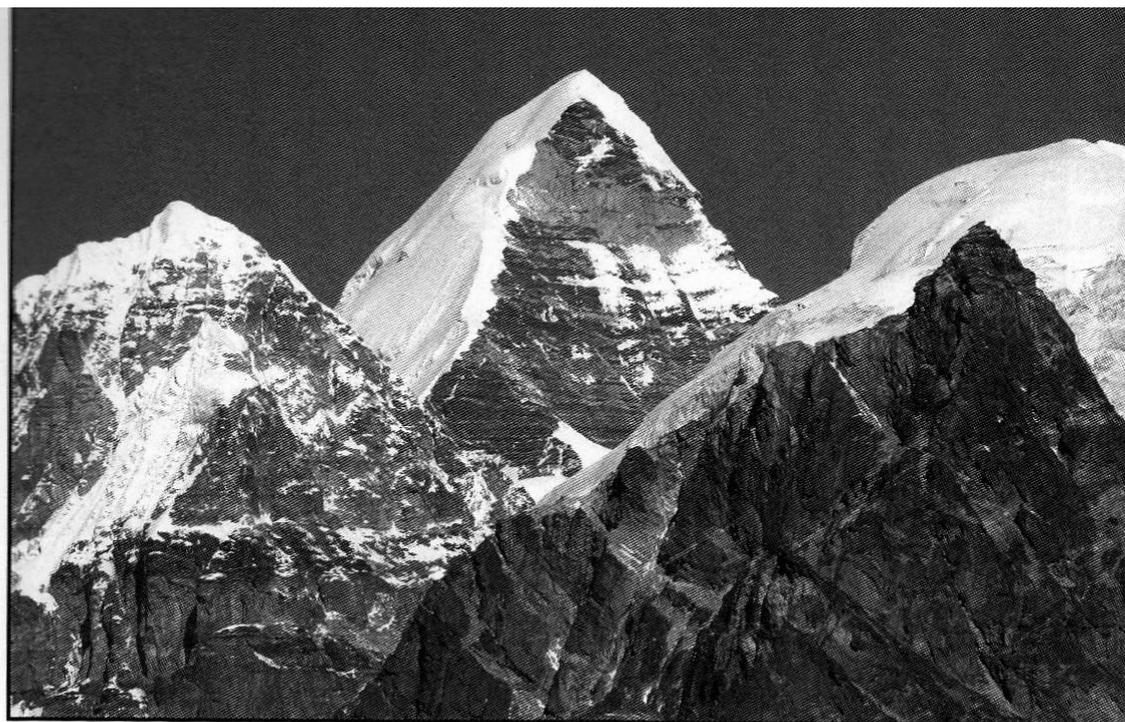
It seems that he had been asked by Sarat Chandra Das at Darjeeling to report on inside affairs of Tibet. Kawaguchi wrote to him from Nepal and Tibet from time to time, and that invited suspicion. In May 1902 he had to escape from Lhasa and fled southward along the Chumbi Valley to India.

In 2013, we had a series of discussion with Tamotsu Ohnishi, a leader of the 2005 expedition and a pioneer – scholar of the Nepal Himalaya and with the results an unclimbed Nangamari I 6,547m of eastern Nepal was chosen to be an objective of the 80th anniversary expedition. The area of Nangamari mountains, was once visited by a Japanese, Bunkyo Aoki who crossed Tipta La 5,095m southwest of Nangamari and entered Tibet in 1912. Aoki arrived at Shigatze by way of Nepal in September.

In June of 2013 "JAC Kansai 80th Anniversary Overseas Mountaineering Project" was organized and relevant meetings were held in succession. In 2014, expedition members were recruited through publicity of the Kansai section.

In late October of 2013, however, Ohnishi who had been nominated to an expedition leader, went through operation of cancer, and passed away on September 20, 2014. To our disappointment, our target "Nangamari I" was first climbed by a party from

Switzerland (local information: not from Switzerland but New Zealand) in November, 2014. On the other hand AAJ 2015 mentions that Pubuk Kang 6,244m climbed by an American party (Editor's note: not American but Australian) was Nangamari I 6,547m. This was a great shock indeed as our main objective had already been not a virgin summit. We were forced to amend our plan to the first ascent of Nangamari II and traverse to Nangamari I. The following two extractions from AAJ are editor's supplements for due reference.



Pabuk Kang seen from the Marson La, a distance of almost 20km to the south. The first ascent followed the snow ridge immediately left of the rocky face. *Tim Macartney-Snape*

AAJ 2011 page 338 (A pyramidal peak in centre is not Pubuk Kan but Nangamari I)

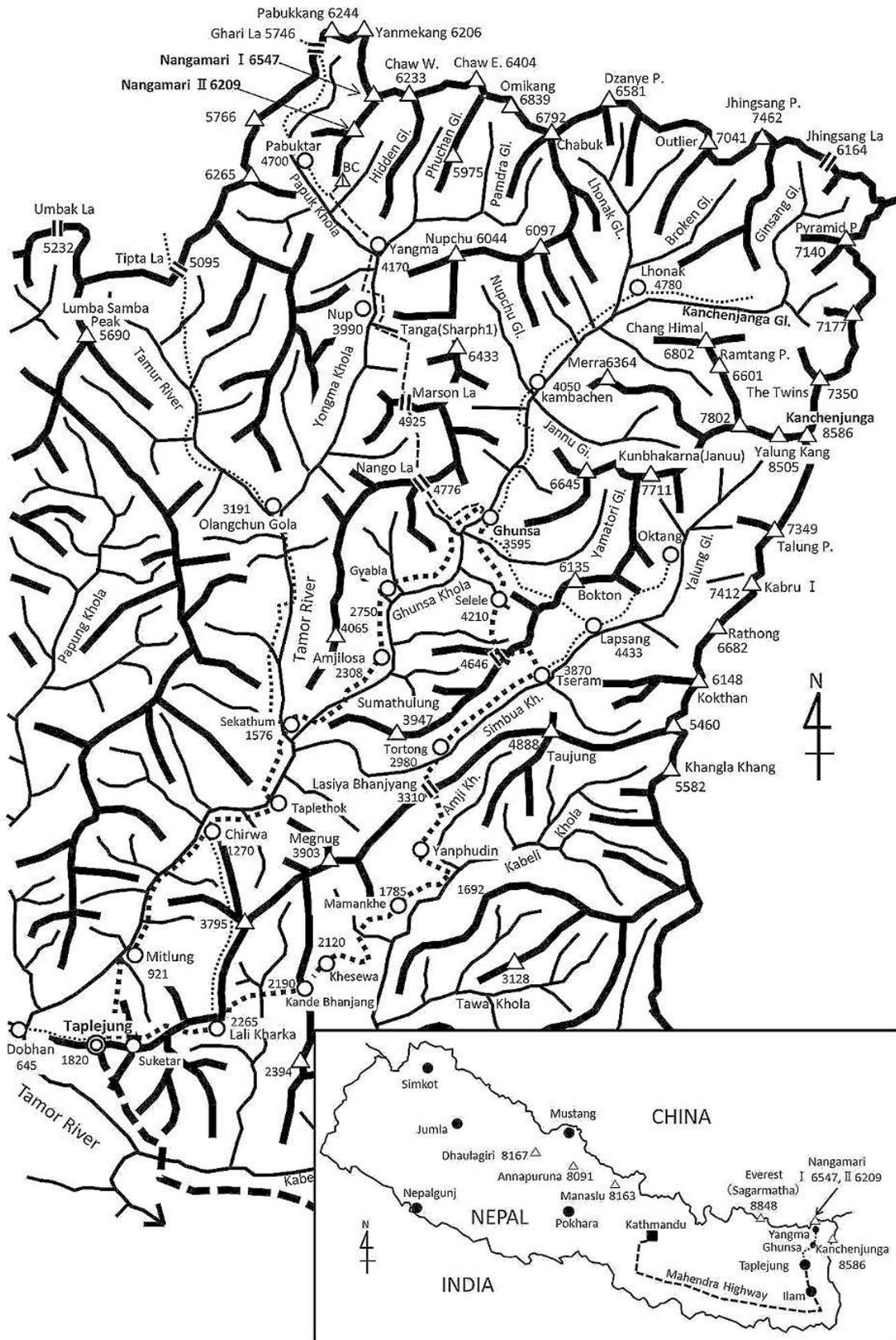
OHMI KANGRI HIMAL

PABUK KANG, CORRECTION

THE NAME OF THE PEAK climbed by Tim-Macartney Snapes' team in 2010 is not Pabuk Kang, as stated in *AAJ 2011*, but Nangamari I, labeled as Peak 6,547m on the HGM-Finn map. Pabuk Kang (6,244m) lies on the frontier ridge approximately two kilometers to the east. The origin of the name Nangamari is uncertain, but older Swiss maps designate the peak Nangayama.

— RODOLPHE POPIER, *THE HIMALAYAN DATABASE, FRANCE*

AAJ 2015 page 305



Climbing Activity



We headed northwest from Yangma along Pabuk Khola and stayed one night in Kharka above Chheche Pokhari. On September 29, base camp was set up in Kharka at 4,800m about 2km downstream of Nangama Pokhari. We first planned to place the base camp in the upper end of lake, but taking care of environments we changed the location. Lama of Ghunsa warned us to be conscious about pollution of river sources.

As the lake was surrounded with steep cliffs formed by erosion due to glacial receding, we had to locate the base camp in the Kharka downstream of the lower end of the lake. This caused altitude of C1 and C2 to set up lower than planned and much affected loads ferry by members.

On the 30th opening ceremony of the base camp was conducted. Climbing and camping gear and foods to be used in the upper camps were sorted out. Some members' physical conditions got deteriorated being suffered from high altitude effect in caravan. 5,600m was originally planned for C1. But considering members' health we changed 5,600m to C2 location, and C1 was set up in midway between original plan of C1 and C2. From the following day we started carrying loads and finding C1 location as well.

We made headway on the upper end of river terrace and then ascended a ridge to 5,209m, where there was water stream and we deposited loads as temporary C1. Rotten bamboo rods, etc. were scattered there as the previous expedition team had presumably set up their camp. On returning we found a water place some 150m beneath the deposit point. In view of convenience of loads relay, two tents were placed as C1 on October 2.



Ascending from wide snow plateau toward Nangamari II

Climbing seemed to be going on in a good pace till October 2, but the following day onward situation changed and we faced new problems. One of members, Iwai having led

reconnaissance and loads ferry, felt getting physically weakened when he came back to C1 after reconnoitering up to a large rock at 5,282m on October 2. In succession, on October 4 onward Matsunaka also suffered from physical problem. Iwai suffered from more than 42° high fever and Matsunaka suffered from serious edema. They went back to Yangma. Meanwhile loads relay and reconnaissance continued. But health conditions of the two members in Yangma did not recovered. Upon Dr. Tateno's advice we requested our travel agent in Kathmandu to hire a helicopter from C1 through satellite phone on October 7. Shigehiro went down to Yangma from C1 via base camp for knowing the two members' conditions and officially hiring the helicopter on October 8. The two members were sent to Kathmandu and Shigehiro entered base camp on October 9. An elder of Yangma said that weather would be bad until the 16th according to Tibetan calendar. Weather forecast from Lhasa through internet told us that I would be fine after October 13.

We entered C1 on October 11, but it began to snow in mid night, and the following day was for rest. In the original schedule the day leaving base camp after the ascent of Nangamari was thought to be October 21 but the revised final schedule was decided on October 22. On October 13 eight members were engaged in loads ferry to the upper deposit point 5,450m and route paving work up to a point for setting up C2. The following day was fine weather, but excessive work of loads ferry was too hard for the members and had them much tired. Naturally the next day was used for their rest in spite of good weather.

Iwai returned to Yangma from Kathmandu by a helicopter in the previous day and entered C1. On October 15, all the members gathered to a place for C2 and set up tents. On October 16, we headed to Nangamari II, but as temperature rise due to good weather increased danger of avalanches, we returned from a point of 5,880m. In far distance glittering Kangchengjunga and Kumbha Karna (Jannu) were sighted to the east.

In this moment we resigned to traverse to Nangamari I for concentrating our remaining energy to the first ascent of Nangamari II, and let Sherpa leader go down to the base camp for arranging caravan of return journey. I soon notified the members that we would make the final assault to the summit of Nangamari II on the following day.

We left C2 at 02:00am. The highest point which we got to in the previous day was reached in two and half hours and we arrived at the lowest col between Nangamari I and II at 06:00am. Temperature was low before sunrise. A divine and overwhelming panorama of the mountain range from Makalu to Chomolungma of Tibet spread in the

west. It was a really breathtaking view that moved all of us. In the left Nangamari II was soaring. Our objective was to accomplish the first ascent of Nangamari II by all the expedition members with no accident.



Peak (left) Nangamari I and ascending ridge to Nangamari II

We formed our team for assaulting the summit from the col as follows. For securing all members' first ascent, two members of younger age 20s departed earlier for fixing rope to pave the route, two members supplied ropes and snow-bars and five members followed in safe. We chose easy snow slope forming four steps toward the summit. We finally reached a col between the north peak and south peak (main peak) and then ascended a knife ridge with utmost care. We climbed the ridge paying attention to a cornice hanging in right side (west side). All nine members stood atop Nangamari II at 12:37 (local time). It was a pity, however, that as clouds were gathering during ascent, visibility was lost. We wanted to take a good picture of all the members at the top, but the summit was a fragile ridge and the picture could be taken only in awkward position to clinching to the ridge.

There was no reason to stay longer after taking the picture for record. More than ten

hours already pasted after the departure. Encouraging those members often sitting down for replacing fix ropes for running belay, we descended down steep slope and returned to the col at 16:11 and untied ropes. Then we safely arrived at C2. On the following day all the members came down to the base camp. The expedition finished in satisfaction. We enjoyed fine weather in return caravan viewing Nangamari from the passes en route. On October 24, we piled a tall kern in which we buried bones of Tamotsu Ohnishi and we said good-by to Nangamari.



Nangamari II (left), Nangamari I (right end)

Expedition members

Expedition leader: Tsuneo SHIGEHIRO (69) male

Climbing leader: Kensuke IWAI (27) male

Members: Kiyō KURODA (63) female – equipment

Masayuki TAKENAKA (26) – transport

Saori TATSUNO (40) female – medical

Miyoko NAGASE (38) female – accounting

Shiro MATSUNAKA (64) male – foods

Kanji MOTEGI (69) male – record

Yusuke MORIMOTO (27) male – communication



Everest and Lhotse viewed in right end

Itinerary

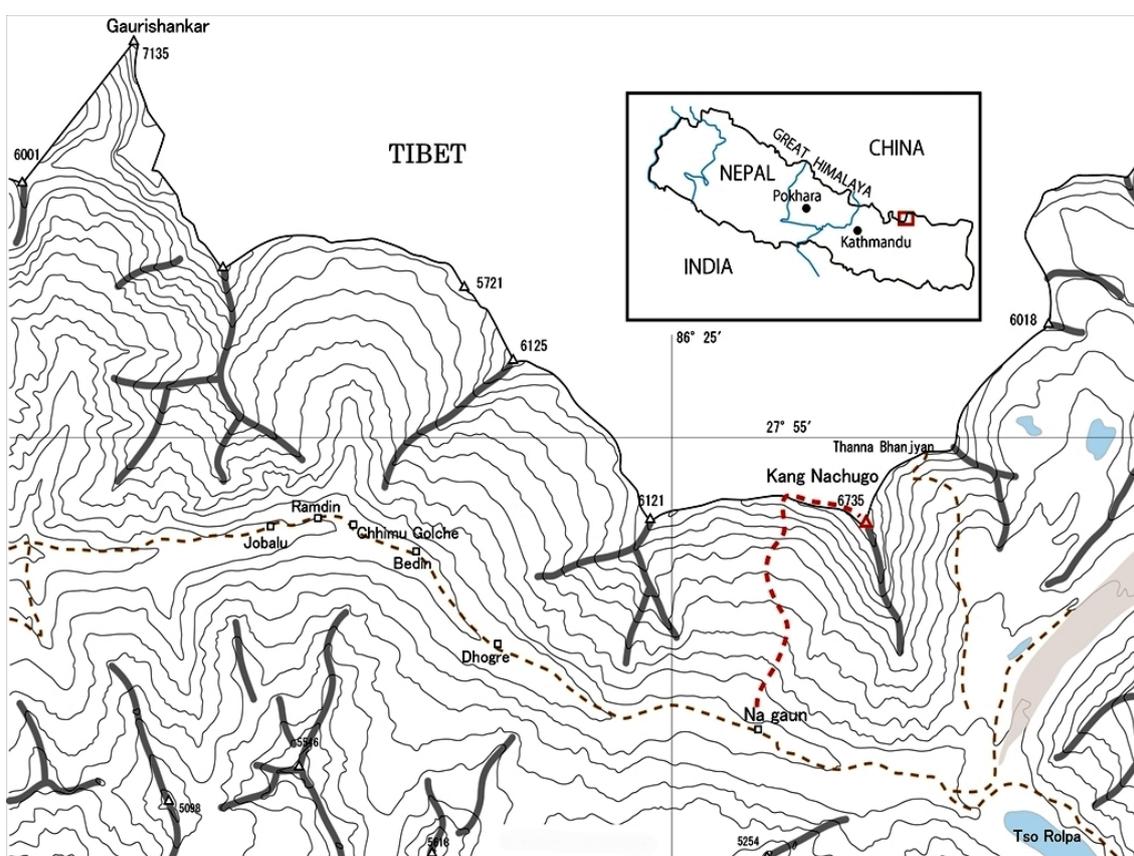
September 9	Kansai Airport to Kathmandu
September 13 –14	Kathmandu to Taplejung
September 16 –21	Taplejung to Ghunsa 3,395m
September 23 –29	Ghunsa to base camp 4,800m
October 2	Setting up C1 5,050m, reaching large rock 5,282m
October 3	Reaching upper deposit place 5,448m
October 6	Iwai and Matsunaka going down to Yangma 4.200m
October 9	Iwai and Matsunaka carried to Kathmandu by helicopter
October 9 –10	Rest at base camp
October 11	Base camp to C1

October 12	Rest at C1
October 13	Route paving to C1, loads relay, Iwai coming back to base camp
October 14	Rest at C1
October 15	Setting up C2 5,580m
October 16	Going to & returning from 5,880m (beneath col Nangamari I & II)
October 17	First ascent of Nangamari II
October 21 –24	Base camp to Ghunsa
October 25 – November 1	Ghunsa to Taplejung
November 2 – 3	Taplejung to Kathmandu
November 7 – 8	Kathmandu to Kansai Airport

G. NARUMI & H. YAMAMOTO
Kang Nachugo 6,735m Expedition 2016
– Rolwaling Himal, Nepal –
(Translated, edited and supplemented by Tom Nakamura)

In autumn of 2016 Genji Narumi and Hiroki Yamamoto conducted an expedition to Kang Nachugo 6,735m with an objective to assault the east face of the mountain which had remained untouched. The east face is a sheer wall of 2,000m being most challenging target. However, as soon as the east face caught the sun, snow began to fall down in the upper part and stones incessantly fell down too. It was felt so dangerous. Snow and ice streaks in the lower rock wall looked risky too. We had to resign to negotiate the east face and choose the other option.

Instead of the east face we turned to the southwest face and succeeded in drawing a new line on the southwest face and stood atop Kang Nachugo 6,735m via the west ridge. This is the second ascent of the southwest face and the summit of the mountain as well.





Aerial view from flight: Kathmandu–Chengdu (Sichuan) 2016, Photo: Tom Nakamura

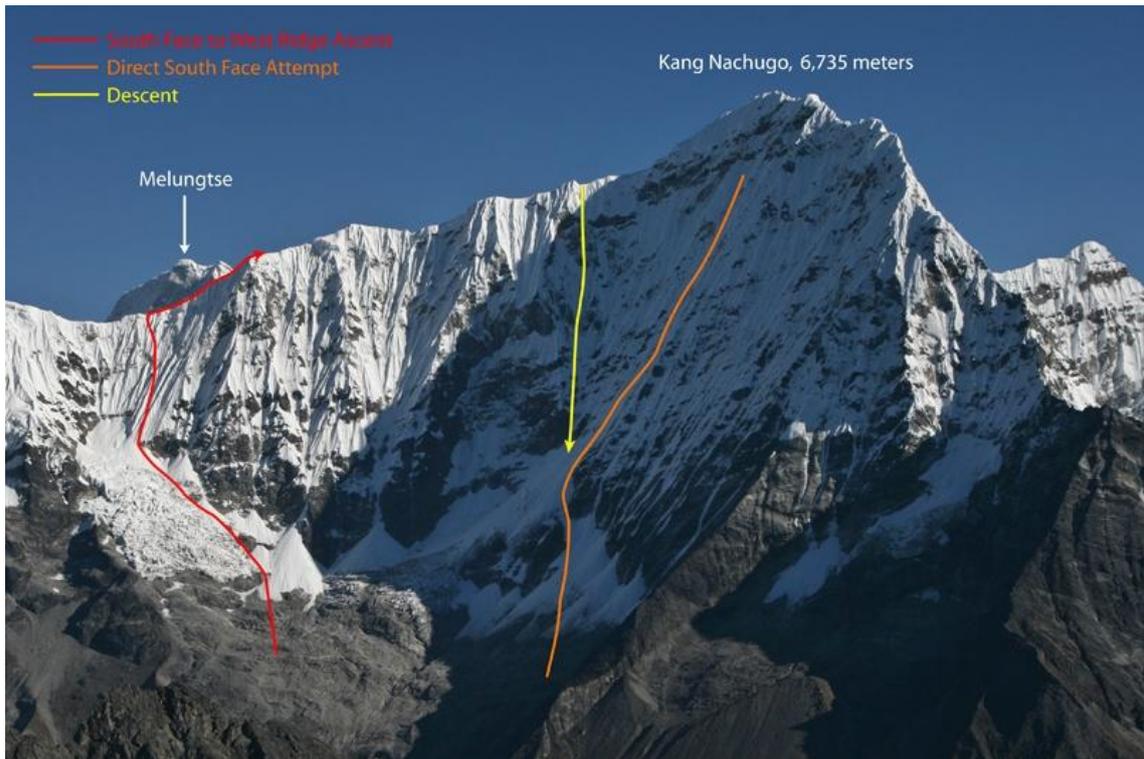
Editor's Note:

On 21 and 22 October 2013 Santiago Padros and Domen Kastelic made the first ascent of Monsoon (1500m /75°) up the SW Face of Kang Nachugo East, Rolwaling valley, Himalaya, Nepal.

Five years after a first attempt by American alpinists Joe Puryear and David Gottlieb, last month Spanish alpinist Santiago Padros and Slovenia's Domen Kastelic carried out the first ascent of the hitherto unclimbed SW Face of Kang Nachugo in Nepal's remote Rolwaling valley.

In autumn 2008 Joe Puryear and David Gottlieb travelled to the Rolwaling valley and made the [first ascent of Kang Nachugo \(6735m\) by ascending the West Ridge alpine style over 5 days](#). Prior to this success the two had attempted to forge a direct line up the SW Face but were forced to bail from 6400m due to bad weather. In the ensuing years the formidable Puryear – Gottlieb climbing partnership established numerous other fantastic routes such as up the South Face of [Jobo Rinjang](#) in 2009 and up the East Face of [Takargo](#) in 2010.

Unfortunately though tragedy struck in October that same year: [Joe Puryear fell to his death on Labuche Kang](#) while attempting to establish a new line together with Gottlieb.



Joe Puryear and David Gottlieb ascents in autumn 2008



Santiago Padros and Domen Kastelic – the first ascent of Monsoon, autumn 2013



G. Narumi and H. Yamamoto – the second ascent (new route), autumn 2016

Climbing Record

Our route on the southwest face was decided as shown in the climbing line of the above picture. BC was set up at 4,100m and ABC at 4,975m four hours walk from BC. The southwest face is mainly snow-ice wall and the steepest part is rock-bands zone at 6,400m, which is not much high but angle is nearly 90 degree.

At 5,100m steep ice slope of 70–80 degree we roped together and started climbing. Ice conditions were not so bad and we climbed continuously almost all the part of wall using two 60m double ropes. After the steep ice slope about 400m 60–70 degree angle slope continued. Around 6,000m the face again became steeper. Detouring rock-band from left side we ascended to a small ridge. Here a steep sugar-snow appeared and it was difficult to take protection. Then a gentle ridge was in our front and we set up a tent. We finished Day 1. The weather after monsoon had a particular feature. As cloud clustered on the wall between 5,400m and 5,800m, we could not see whole of the wall from BC and ABC. It was fine and very much windy above 5,800m.

On Day 2 we climbed a ridge to the most critical part, vertical wall, and then reached a

ridge of ice and sugar snow. We deposited a tent and supplies at about 6,400m and from here we made headway to the summit. We followed a steep knife-ridge rope by rope and continuously. In three hours we stood atop on October 17. On Day 3 we made a direct descent by 17 times rappelling as shown in green dotted line of the above picture.



Ascending west ridge toward the summit.



On the summit



First pitch on the wall



Gaurishankar (left) and Menlungtse (right)



East Face of Kang Nachugo



Base Camp

YASUHIRO HANATANI
Himalayan Camp 2016
Rolwaling Kang 6664m in the Nepal Himalaya

This is to report the second Himalayan Camp conducted in succession to 2015 when Randsiyar 6224m and Landuk were climbed. A chief objective of the Himalaya Camp is to publicly recruit beginners in the Himalaya and help them to safely climb the mountains and further motivate them to step-up their Himalayan experiences.



We met up in Kathmandu on September 25. After completing three days preparation for mountaineering such as briefing, we departed Kathmandu on September 29. Rolwaling region is one of the most affected areas by the earthquake in 2015. In that year, we planned to enter the mountain for the first time, but we abandoned the plan because of difficulty for approaching to the mountains from Rolwaling region.

The road conditions were not good because of the beginning of the season, so we set up base camp (BC) considerably lower side at an altitude of about 4700m than we planned. Except for the point, all the members entered the base camp on October 5 without any other big troubles.

After resting and environmental management in base camp, we started reconnaissance on October 7. We walked through a complex terrain in the moraine zone, and decided a route with piling up cairns. We met other Japanese team who had come back from Parchamo peak at the time, and knew almost conditions of the upper side. The forecast predicted that bad weather would continue for some days, but actually there seemed to be no serious weather collapse, so we were very relieved. Monsoon opened later than normal year, around October 10.

From October 11 we departed for reconnaissance and acclimatizing to high altitude for four days and three nights. All members except Hanatani never had seen Rolwaling Kang. On the first day, we ascended to an altitude of about 5000m which was about 300m higher from base camp and stayed overnight there. We felt stuffy because it was the first time to stay at this altitude. Although the route we used was famous as trekking route, the conditions were bad and we had to climb some difficult places.

On the second day, we slowly climbed at our own pace because individual pace was different from each other. In the moraine zone where few people had passed, we had not only to find the route but to be careful not to collapse the stones under our feet. Then, we made Camp 1 (C1) at about 5500m slowly over two hours. At this altitude, Oxygen was thin, and some members had headaches.

On the third day, the goal was to touch the place at 6000m. The glacier of Rolwaling Kang was not bad, so we climbed and reached the goal easily. From the place, we felt that Rolwaling Kang became bigger and closer.

After the acclimatization to high altitude, we rested for two days at the base camp.

On October 17, we started the final attack and reached the camp I. Next day, we

established the final camp at 6100m. On the day, Iida and Hanatani made a reconnaissance. At first, they tried to go to the ridge. However, the snow conditions were not good, and it is difficult to make anchors. Therefore, they decided to climb the snow face on the left side of the ridge. After climbing four pitches, they deposited some equipment and went back to the final camp.

On October 19, we left the camp at 5:30. There was no wind, and it was sunny and good day for climbing. We divided into two teams, and climbed the snow face in parallel. The face was wide, so we chose such climbing system. The snow was more abundant than we expected, so it was hard to find solid ice where we could make anchors. We always chose the line that was safe to descend.

As previously planned, we reached the edge of summit plateau around noon. The form of summit plateau was not different from the one on the photo of google earth or a contour map. Therefore, we could walk to peak easily. The summit of Rolwaling Kang was narrow, and we, all members, stood on there at 13:05.

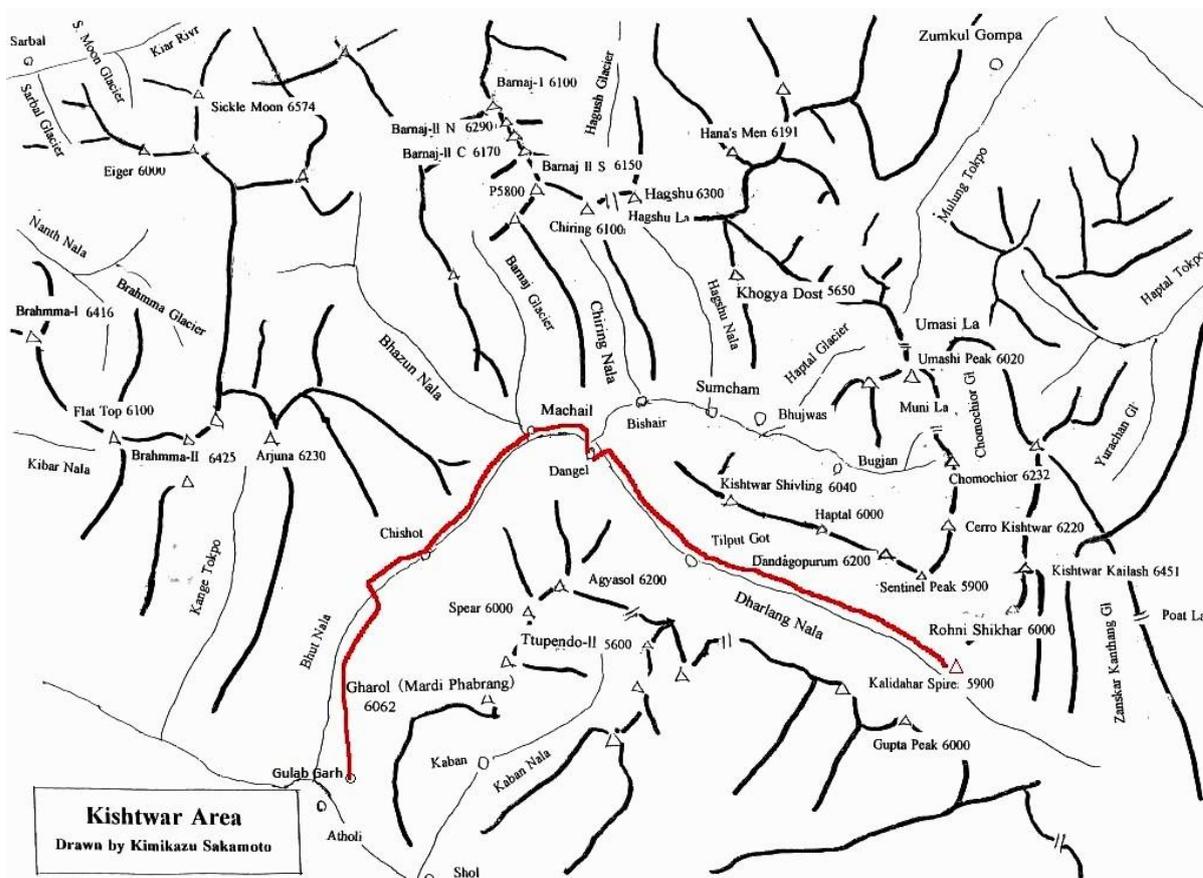


At Drambao Glacier

JIM LOWTHER
First Ascent of Gupta – Kishtwar, Jammu & Kashmir
 British / American Team 2016

The idea of climbing in Kishtwar first cropped up in the early 1990's. Graham Little was my climbing partner at the time and he told me about a 5,618m high unclimbed peak called Gupta that he'd seen from the top of nearby Rohini Shikhar, which he climbed in 1989. It's a shapely rock peak dominating the Dharlang Nala and knowing how good the granite was likely to be, we both thought that Gupta would be a plumb objective to go for.

Unfortunately our application to climb the mountain was rejected three days before we were due to leave the UK in September 1996. We were told there had been some insurgent activity in Gulab Garh and the Government of India had decided to close Kishtwar to climbers. It remained closed for the next 17 years. This didn't matter to us though; Graham pulled a rabbit out of a hat with a superb alternative suggestion for a new route, the North Face of Kullu Eiger in Parvati Valley, Himachal Pradesh.



The timely intervention of Dr. M S Gill secured us IMF permission in three days and the expedition went ahead successfully.

Then in 2013 Mick Fowler sprung open the doors to Kishtwar by getting consent to climb Kishtwar Kailash. Although he may not have been the first to re-enter the area, it was this widely reported climb of his that brought Kishtwar to everyone's attention and has prompted a headlong gold rush of climbers ever since, drawn to a paradise of amazing unclimbed granite walls and peaks. So I thought we needed to get in there and climb Gupta before anyone else did!

I sent a picture of Gupta's majestic north face taken by Mick, to my good American friends Mark Richey and Mark Wilford and they were instantly on for another trip together to follow our last epic to Saser Kangri II in 2009.

'Gold rush' might be a bit of an exaggeration though. The road along the Chandra Bhaga gorge, particularly the section between Udaipur and Gulab Garh, has to be one of the most extreme road building endeavours in the world and travelling along it is not for the feint hearted. But we met two American teams on our journey which certainly created the impression of there being a gold rush even if collectively we were the only visitors to the area in 2017.

Kaushal Desai organised our trip for us and we met him at his HQ in Manali after an overnight super deluxe sleeper bus journey from Delhi on 9th September that was so uncomfortable that we decided get a private jeep for our return journey. Kaushal was Mick's recommendation and he did a great job for us throughout the trip starting with prompt and helpful replies to emails during the planning period all the way through to providing us with a great team and good base camp kit and food, not to mention hard core jeep drivers and proficient horsemen too.

But military sensitivities still required us to approach Kishtwar from the Rhotang Pass, hence starting from Manali and the scary two day jeep journey down the Chandra Bhaga gorge with an overnight stop at Udaipur. The latter part of the road route is cut out of vertical granite and a 500m sheer drop into the river gorge yawns on one side; we only saw three other vehicles on the road that day. After a very dusty, teeth-rattling journey we finally arrived at Gulab Garh late in the evening of the 11th and stayed in the comfortable Satyam Shiram guest house.



Spot the jeep in Chandra Bhaga gorge (Copyright: Jim Lowther)

After completing formalities with the police the following morning we started our trek up the Dharlang Nala with 15 horses carrying our gear. The pony drivers didn't hang around and progress was so swift that the villages we passed through on the way went by in a blur. But what was memorable was the lushness of the valley, the heady scent of the cedar forest and the ever present roar of the river in post monsoon spate. The village houses are painted bright primary colours of red, blue and even yellow that contrast with the dun browns of the farmland in full harvest: stubble fields, stacked stoops of cut barley and hay and standing crops of nearly-mature maize.

The two Marks are more familiar with the scrub approaches of arid parts of the Karakoram, so green and verdant Kishtwar was a welcome break for them as well as providing a feast of birdwatching opportunities. In my case the virgin forest was a dendrologist's paradise with no evidence of logging and a wide variety of tree species to admire such as southern beech, chestnut, walnut, different types of cedar, sugar pine, maple, sycamore and the most enormous elm trees I've ever seen.

We stopped at the village of Chishot where our super-organised Liaison Officer Rajender Sharma (aka Rinku) arranged for us to sleep in the grounds of the temple. First thing the following morning, the 13th, Chishot was alive and busy with major

outbound traffic of sheep and goats driven by their Muslim shepherds who were heading down to the Kashmir valley now that winter was approaching. Walking against the flow of animals along winding, dusty narrow paths, we eventually broke through the top of the tree line to be greeted by wide open fields around Machel, the temple site of the Hindu God Chandi Matta and the focal point of many thousands of pilgrims (who unfortunately left a lot of litter behind them). Here we completed the last formalities with police and continued on to Dengel, the last bridge in the valley, where we met two young American climbers, Crystal and Whitney Clark from Colorado. They were stranded in Dengel because their horses had bolted the night before and they were awaiting the arrival of new ones, so we said goodbye and good luck and never saw them again close up. Each team progressed up the valley on opposite sides of the river, aiming for different objectives, so we could only wave at them on the couple of occasions that we saw them afterwards.

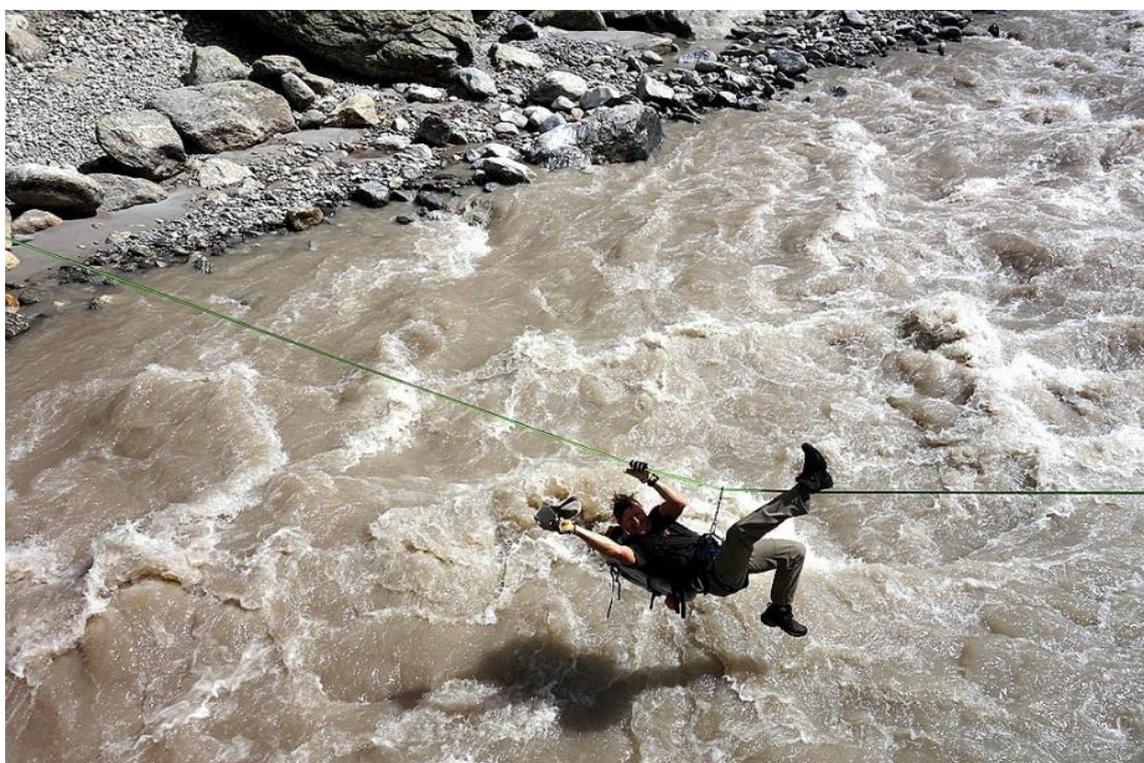
The trekking was fast and easy on the 14th. The route took us first through more cedar pine forest, then birch and the river became smaller and quieter. After two or three steps in the valley we levelled off at 3,500m and it became a series of wide open pastures and the river a braided gravel bed that looked deceptively crossable (which it wasn't). This continued all day and by 4 pm we found a decent enough base camp opposite Gupta...but on the wrong side of the river. We were underneath lots of granite towers, amidst huge climbable boulders and we could see Mick's superb route up Kishtwar Kailash.

Our camp staff, Pritam Yangthangi and Amit Bodh, made a delicious dinner of chicken from one of the six that made it to base camp alive inside a metal box on the back of one of our horses. We were told that we had 90 unbroken eggs left from the 150 that we set off with, which meant we could still have plenty of omelettes every morning that we were in base camp. Getting drinkable water was a challenge though because we were camped beside a river draining the Chomochoi Glacier which was thick with rock flour and required filtering. However we'd brought a horse load's worth of beer with us to compensate our thirst quenching needs.

The pony team left us on the morning of the 15th September and we arranged for them to come back on 1st October to collect us for the return journey. That gave us a fortnight to scope the mountain and climb it. But first we had to work out how to get across the river, which looked like it was crossable lower down but wasn't an appealing prospect at base camp. I've lost two friends to river crossing accidents and I treat Himalayan rivers with the greatest of respect and this one looked just as tricky as the rest.

Richey came up with the bright idea that one of us should swim across the river – which it was decided would be me – with a rope as a safety line that would then be tensioned across a shortened span of river between the framing of a collapsed shepherd’s bridge. Amazingly this worked, so feeling rather chuffed with ourselves we pushed on up Gupta following a series of grassy ledges and the tracks of Bharal goats and we left a cache of hardware at 4,300m before heading down again.

The Tyrolean rope bridge worked quite well at first but however hard we tightened the 7mm Kevlar cord, the 25m span was too wide and we got wet each time we pulled ourselves across. Wilford solved the problem with the introduction of an 8.5mm dynamic rope to augment the cord, which we fixed the following day and Richey tested this a couple of times and floated across the river a good six feet above the water. Very pleased with this, we went back to base camp and assembled three days of food and clothing for a carry up to a new high camp that we established at 4,600m on the 18th on scree beside a small snow field in the middle of the Northeast face. This required a fair amount of rock shifting and dirt scraping and shovelling to make a level platform for a bivy tent and one sleeping position for a person outside, but was worth it because this was to be our launch pad for the technical climbing above and a place to sleep and acclimatise.



Mark Richey crossing stream on Tyrolean rope bridge (Copyright: Mark Richey)

We ferried a second load up from the cache to the launch pad on the 19th and spent another night there before descending to base camp on the 20th. Up until this point the weather had been consistently good and stable and since we were ahead of schedule we decided to have two days' rest. This suited me because I came down with a fever and was bed ridden whilst the two Marks went bouldering on 22nd. Richey had a fall and cracked his heel bone on landing but didn't know this until he got back to the States; in the meantime he bore the pain and hobbled around base camp and suffered during the climb. I meanwhile succumbed to a tick bite that brought me out in a livid itchy rash from head to toe, so we extended the rest period by another two days to allow both Richey and me to recover. It then rained in base camp on the 24th for the whole day, which made us feel less guilty about having a rest. This was the only day's bad weather on the whole trip and when the clouds parted the dark granite of the north face had a thin covering of powder snow and the temperature adjusted downwards for the rest of the trip.

We adjusted our tactics and took with us a three man tent to swap with the two man bivvy tent at the launch pad on the 25th in case we had to sit out bad weather waiting for the summit push. In the event the weather was fantastic for the climb and we had clear views of the whole of the Kishtwar range and beyond for the duration of the climb. The route to the launch pad (Camp 1) was pretty convoluted but very safe, linking together grassy terraces, animal trods, scree rakes and the like. When we arrived at the camp the two Marks had enough energy to walk to the top of a tower above the camp to spy out the route across the Northeast face towards the East ridge. They spied a promising line and left a fixed rope for the first pitch in the morning.

On the 26th we moved off from camp 1 at 4,800m up scree and a small snow field to the base of the fixed rope and jumared up this to the top of a pinnacle ridge that connected to the main face. Once on this Richey lead about six pitches up snow covered rocks over the next six hours to a decent bivvy site tucked well into the Northeast face. We did some heavy engineering to make flat ledges out of dirt and settled down for the night after a frugal meal of salami, cheese, crackers, Ramin noodles and tea. Wilford slept outside on an enormous yellow blow up mattress and Richey and I had the two man bivvy tent to ourselves.

The sun hit camp 2 at 6.20 the next morning but we decided to sit it out and wait for our gear to dry. There was no hurry, it was warm and blue skies promised glorious mixed climbing across the Northeast face to the East ridge. Richey lead off across a snow

ramp and scratched his way up a strenuous pitch through an overhanging chimney and a snow-filled rake towards another snow patch. Another pitch followed and then the best pitch of the whole climb, an upward-slanting traverse left across snow covered slabs with frozen turf placements for tools and tiny in-cuts for mono points, all of it about grade M5. Wilford and I followed up this, seconding, reaching the sunlit East ridge to be greeted by an ebullient Richey. We were looking across the width of the East ridge which consisted of climbable granite slabs and ledges; this narrowed to a finer ridge above so we thought easier ground would be found by traversing across to the southern side of the East ridge. This is the side of the mountain that we couldn't see from base camp so we were beginning to think the whole mountain would go.

I led a couple of pitches, then Wilford a couple and then Richey took us up to a snow patch that cut through the East ridge onto the broad South face. We scrambled up this for about 100m and found a superb bivvy site perched hard on the East ridge with the summit beckoning above us! The mountain was not throwing any nasty surprises at us so spirits were high as we melted ice and brewed up for summit day; the Americans slept in the tent and I had a spacious ledge outside with awesome views of peaks to the South and stars above.

The sun woke us at 6.30 on the morning of the 28th but we weren't on our way until nine o'clock; we wanted the rock to be warm for the summit day. Wilford wore rock shoes again and climbed three straightforward pitches up the ridge. Richey followed this with two harder pitches of about 5.9 in big boots on truly immaculate, grippy granite with lots of gear placements and chicken heads for holds. I seconded all of this and then pitched through up snow to the summit ridge which was a snow cornice overhanging a vertical drop down the featureless North face.

The others eventually came up to join me and then pushed on to the summit proper, which was an arrangement of tottering blocks. Unrestricted views into Zanskar, Pangi and towards Kashmir greeted us at the top. The sun shone and there wasn't a breath of wind. We did some self-timed photos and whilst looking around noticed a tiny red dot 1,000m below us on the glacier to the north of Gupta. It must have been the two American girls in their tent so we shouted down at them and got some feint shouts and waves back. Camaraderie in the mountains and an unclimbed summit all to ourselves with expansive views under a windless blue sky and our trip climaxed at that moment! To the Southeast we could see the imposing profile of Shib Shankar (aka Sersank), the

north buttress of which was at that very moment being climbed by Mick Fowler and Victor Saunders. I remembered failing miserably on this mountain in 2007: Graham Little and I turned back halfway up the Northwest ridge when we encountered friable shale so it was nice to know that it was being climbed in good style by some Brits.

Feeling well pleased with our efforts and thoroughly enjoying ourselves, we slowly started a descent back to camp 3, which went in about four raps. All of us were cream crackered. I have to hand it to my two partners for their intuitive route finding, gutsy but safe climbing and perpetual good humour, which is why I like climbing with them so much.

Hoar frost coated my sleeping bag as a weak sun tried to penetrate swirling clouds at 6.30 on the morning of the 29th. I got up and made some brews but the others weren't going to budge, so I melted snow for the day's water canisters.

We had that sinking feeling of knowing the descent was going to be difficult so we weren't in a hurry but eventually we were away by 9.30-ish. The descent was first a scramble to the snow patch on the East ridge, then three raps to a ledge system that we could walk along to the edge of the East ridge. Wilford persuaded us to take a direct line straight down the Northeast face, down a snow gully filled with rock spikes, about 10 raps in all until we were back at the camp 1 tent. It was a miracle we didn't get our ropes hung. We left there at 2.30 pm and were down at the Tyrolean by dusk at 6, concluding an excellent five day Alpine-style climb. Rinku met us with a big smile and walked us back to base camp whereupon we were greeted by Pritam and Amit with cups of tea, chicken and whisky.

The sun stayed with us for two more days at base camp and the two day walk out with the horses. We waved at the American girls across the river when we passed their camp. They shouted their congratulations and news of their adventures but I don't think they climbed anything. If you haven't got a fixed objective to go for it's easy to get blown away by all the possibilities and end up getting nothing done.

As we left the Dharlang Nala we carried with us memories of a happy and successful trip in beautiful unspoilt surroundings. The journey to Kishtwar is a long one but there is plenty of scope for future exploration of unclimbed peaks that make it worthwhile.



Gupta, showing route (Copyright: Mick Fowler)



Traversing across the north face (Copyright: Mark Wilford)



Camp 3



**Wilford & Lowther close to summit, day 4
(Copyright: Mark Richey)**



Summit snow slope with Kishitwar Kailash in the background (Copyright: Mark Richey)



Richey, Wilford and Lowther on the summit (Copyright: Mark Wilford)



View towards Zaskar from camp 3 (Copyright: Jim Lowther)

HARISH KAPADIA
On Apatani Plateau 2016
Arunachal Pradesh – Northeast India

We were standing on a small hill named 'view point'. It overlooked the valley of Ziro, the home of the Apatanis. There were fields stretching on all sides of the flat valley surrounded by forested mountain ridges. At different corners of the plateau were seven villages, large and small where the Apatanis lived. They have done so for several centuries. No one knows their exact lineage- did they arrive from Tibet? Now, many buildings are cemented houses with tin roofs, unlike the traditional bamboo houses with thatched roofs. In centre of the valley, is an airstrip with a helicopter waiting to take off. This strip is used to supply goods to many remote villages and army posts in the north towards the border with China.

Apart from electric wires stretching in front of us and obstructing a clear view, and smatterings of construction, perhaps nothing much has changed here for over a century. Though the valley is only a hundred kilometres from the plains of Assam and not too high, it was left unexplored till the last decade of the nineteenth century. Gentle Apatanis did not venture to go south, through a Nishi tribe country who were war-like and hostile to any outsiders. Their prime need salt, was supplied through Tibet, but for which they were self-sufficient. It was in 1889 that H. M. Crowe, Manager of the Joyhing Teas Estate at North Lakhimpur (NLP) in Assam decided to reach the plateau in the hope of finding more land to expand his tea business. He reached here on Christmas eve and was impressed by the wealth and demeanour of the Apatanis. This visit established one of the earliest contacts with the Apatani Plateau. From the following year, a group of Apatanis came to NLP for trade, always travelling in a large group to protect themselves against the Nishi tribes

Trouble was not far away. In 1896, a Hill-Miri contractor was killed by Apatanis and they burned his house. It was a small skirmish but as it happened in the British territory, an army unit was despatched to the plateau in 1897, under the command of Captain McCabe. The locals surrendered immediately and in the final settlement, three Mithuns, priceless for Apatanis, and a Tibetan bell was given to the British. They were unable to drive the Mithuns to Assam and hence returned them, but the precious bell was carried back to Assam. This expedition opened the route and there were regular visits by the Apatanis to NLP. A regular trade route was established in 1912 that continued till the 1940s.

Edward Tuite Dalton, served as Junior Assistant Commissioner of Assam in 1845. He wrote a book '*The Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*' which became a standard reference for the British officers to deal with the tribes.

Initially, Dalton did not reach the Apatani valley. But when he did, in 1897, 'he was swept away by the rhapsody of personal observation'. Other colonial accounts too rarely improved on this vision of prosperity as captured by R. B. McCabe.

The sight is one I shall never forget, as we suddenly emerged on a magnificent plateau....Our hearts warmed up at the sight of primroses, violets, wild currants, strawberries and raspberries, and I felt disposed to almost believe some of the wonderful stories we had heard of the fabulous wealth of this country.

(McCabe, R.B., 'Report on the Apa Tanang Expedition of 1897')

This view was shared by Haimendorf in 1944 when he referred to the Apatani valley as an 'incipient civilization in miniature'.

By 1944, the Japanese were pushing north through Burma and Nagaland, and the Tibetans were eying the south. This made the British take much interest in the Apatani plateau. A government outpost was established and an airstrip was constructed. Now, the valley was officially a part of the British territory in all respects.

J.P. Mills, advisor to the government planned to study the tribes of the northeast. He invited well known German anthropologist Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf to India to accompany him. His arrival in 1938 coincided with war being declared in Europe. He was therefore arrested as 'German Enemy Alien'. Through his connections, he managed to be transferred to Hyderabad from his open prison in Nagaland. In 1944, he unexpectedly received a telegram from Mills summoning him to Shillong. He was asked to go to the Apatani valley as 'Special Advisor, Subansiri'. His assignment was to study the locals and the Chinese influence on the local tribesmen. While being stationed there, he was to assert the British control in these contested regions.

Haimendorf reached NLP in February 1944. After waiting for porters, he hired some Apatanis who had come down for trade. It was a difficult trek as the local tribal were not used to carrying heavy loads. He stayed in the valley for eight months and established external authority in the valley for the first time. An 'Inner Line' was set up

by the British to stop outsiders entering the tribal area and proceed towards Tibet. When he left the valley in 1945, the British administrator F. N. Betts was deputed here. He was accompanied by his anthropologist wife Ursula Betts (formerly Ursula Graham Bower) who studied the life style of the Apatanis and recorded it in various journals and a book. When they left the valley in 1948, the British followed their old dictum, 'first send explorers, then administrators and finally the army'. A platoon of Assam Rifles was permanently stationed here (premises still exists) and it was supplied by air. These were the years when the World War II had just ended and the military was very much in command in the Northeast.

All this influx eroded the authority of the local 'bulyang' (village council) whom Apatanis respected and obeyed. In frustration, they attacked the government outposts after Betts had left. Assam rifles retaliated and bows and arrows of Apatanis were no match for rifles and bullets. Five villages were burnt, few tribals were killed and the government established total control. The Apatanis fled into hills. In a battle of attrition, culprits were arrested and sent to the prison at NLP and they never returned. With India now independent, there were different administrators. In 1952, a Political Officer was appointed, R.G. Menzies, an Anglo-Indian. He moved all offices from NLP to Ziro and expanded the airstrip. The entire state was put under the administration of North East Frontier Agency (NEFA, 1954-1972). At the southern end of the valley, the forest was cleared and a new administrative town called Hapoli was established and the village was called 'Old Ziro'. An all-weather road was built to connect NLP via Kimin, schools, churches, jail and a lively bazar sprang up. In 1987, the state of Arunachal Pradesh was formed and Hapoli expanded with large office complex, court house, circuit house and forest office.

2016

Five of us arrived at this historic valley in November 2016. In a day and a half we were at this valley from Mumbai, travelling by different means. A flight to Guwahati, night train to Naharlagun (Itanagar- first and only rail connection in Arunachal Pradesh) and a 5 hour road drive. The road after Potin, where road from Kimin joins, was atrocious and thoroughly tested our nerves. Emerging in the valley at Hapoli was a delight. Many Home Stay options are now available which allow you to stay in comfort and interact with the Apatani families. We settled with Hibu Tatu, an erudite school teacher who became our moral guide.

We visited a few villages in the valley. People had seen many tourists and in fact too many, which we realised to our awkwardness when we were frowned upon by a lady in

tribal wear whom we were trying to photograph. The ladies here wear a nose ring made of bamboo and their forehead to jaw is tattooed in a single line. We came to understand that that young ladies felt violated as they felt they were disfigured before she could reach an age of decision. With the younger generation now pursuing higher education in Delhi or Bangalore, the parents during their visits found themselves being ridiculed for their appearances in these places. Therefore, the community (not government order) collectively decided to do away with these practices. Thus, what you see today is the last generation of ladies in such tattoos. .

It was refreshing to stay in the village and visit the bazar. On Sunday, the Church service, both Baptist and Catholic, were in the local language but a song was sung in Hindi from an Indian film. The bazar had many stalls selling supposedly delicacies like live worms, dry rats and fish, and birds. One may not understand food habits of the Apatanis, but one will find these items on the menu at best restaurants in the east, like Hong Kong, Seoul and elsewhere. They are more akin to the eastern food habits and we have no right to judge them. Now they grow Kiwis and it is available in plenty. Several shops were selling mobile phones, served by three operators. There was a line of seven cobblers, a seasonal line up for locals to repair their footwears, most essential in this remote part. Thereon, we went to 'Shiva stones', two high vertical stones discovered a few years ago. Due to its shape, it was declared as Shiva' Lingam. The Apatanis believe only in Donyi-Polo (Sun and Moon) but a road has been built to the site and a temple is proposed to be built there and some garbage is already collecting here suggest. Nothing better than religious tourism to draw a crowd.

Tale Valley

About 15 km away on a very rough road is Pange which is at the entrance of the newly created Tale Game Sanctuary. A comfortable forest rest house is located here and sitting in the warm sun we watched a family of Mithuns playing around. These large bulls indicate the real wealth of a tribal community. Next day, we started to trek up to the Tale Top. It was an exhilarating walk, a wide trail, a gentle climb amidst some of the finest forests. The trail was lined with large ferns and a variety of orchids. We camped on the trail itself as the forest was so thick in growth that it did not allow any camping ground otherwise.

On the last day on the trail, a view of the high mountains finally emerged. Until recently, these were the unknown range of peaks in the northwest in the 6800 m range, in line with the known peak of Nyegygi Kangsang. One of the them, 6655 m in height at

the head of the Kamla valley, has been erroneously indicated as 'Takpa Siri' in old maps. Takpa Siri, 5735 m, is one of the most revered peaks for Buddhists and Tibetans and the Monpa of upper Subansiri routinely perform a kora (circumambulation) every 12 years. As the peak is located on the present Line of Control (McMahon Line) going around the peak entails trekking through both Indian and Chinese territories, it is now forbidden by both countries, resulting in the loss of a fine tradition. I have previously trekked in the valleys at foot of Takpa Siri, Tsari chu to its east and Yume chu to the west, reaching extreme points within Indian territory on both sides of the peak.

Peak 6655 m that we saw was attempted by an Indian-British expedition in 1999, led by Col. Balwant Sandhu and Doug Scott. Suffering from shortage of porters, malaria and other sickness they managed to reach the base camp before being rescued by a helicopter.

To the north, the Tale valley peak of Pij Cholo (2565 m - 8417 ft) offers good views of these peaks overlooking the Kamla valley. The Khru river joins the Kamla, which finally merges with the Subansiri river flowing from Tibet to India. Khru and Kamla are both relatively unexplored and the earliest account of any visit is by Haimendorf (1944). In 1972, a bureaucrat T. K. Bhattacharjee roamed through the Kamla valley and crossed over to the Khru before exiting. His accounts are major reference for future visitors.

Our time in the valley was over rather soon. But we had a lot to look forward to in future. We enjoyed the hospitality of the wonderful people, saw emerging cultures, experienced different life styles, enjoyed forest walks and saw grand snow peaks.

We live in a wonderful world that is full of beauty, charm and adventure. There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our eyes open.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Photo Gallery



Photo captions:

(left) Apatani Pios lady with distinguished tattoos

(centre) Apatani lady with distinguished tattoos

(right) Typical Apanani headdress



Centre of Apatani plateau with airstrip in centre



Apatani festival (Photo: Hilbu Tau)



Double decker Live Root Bridge in Meghalaya



Crossing Brahmaputra to Apatani plateau by boat



Historic Buptist Church at Hapoli-
Apanani plateau

Mithua, Apatani bull which is
their treasure



Newly discovered large stones shaped as Load Shivashape

REIKO TERASAWA
Return to Arunachal Pradesh
Supplements
Indo-Japanese Joint River Rafting Expedition 1991
The First Descent of Brahmaputra
(Translated, summarized, supplemented by Tom Nakamura)

I headed for Arunachal Pradesh on November 20 and returned on December 10, 2016. This was the third visit to the region with three subjects to pursue.



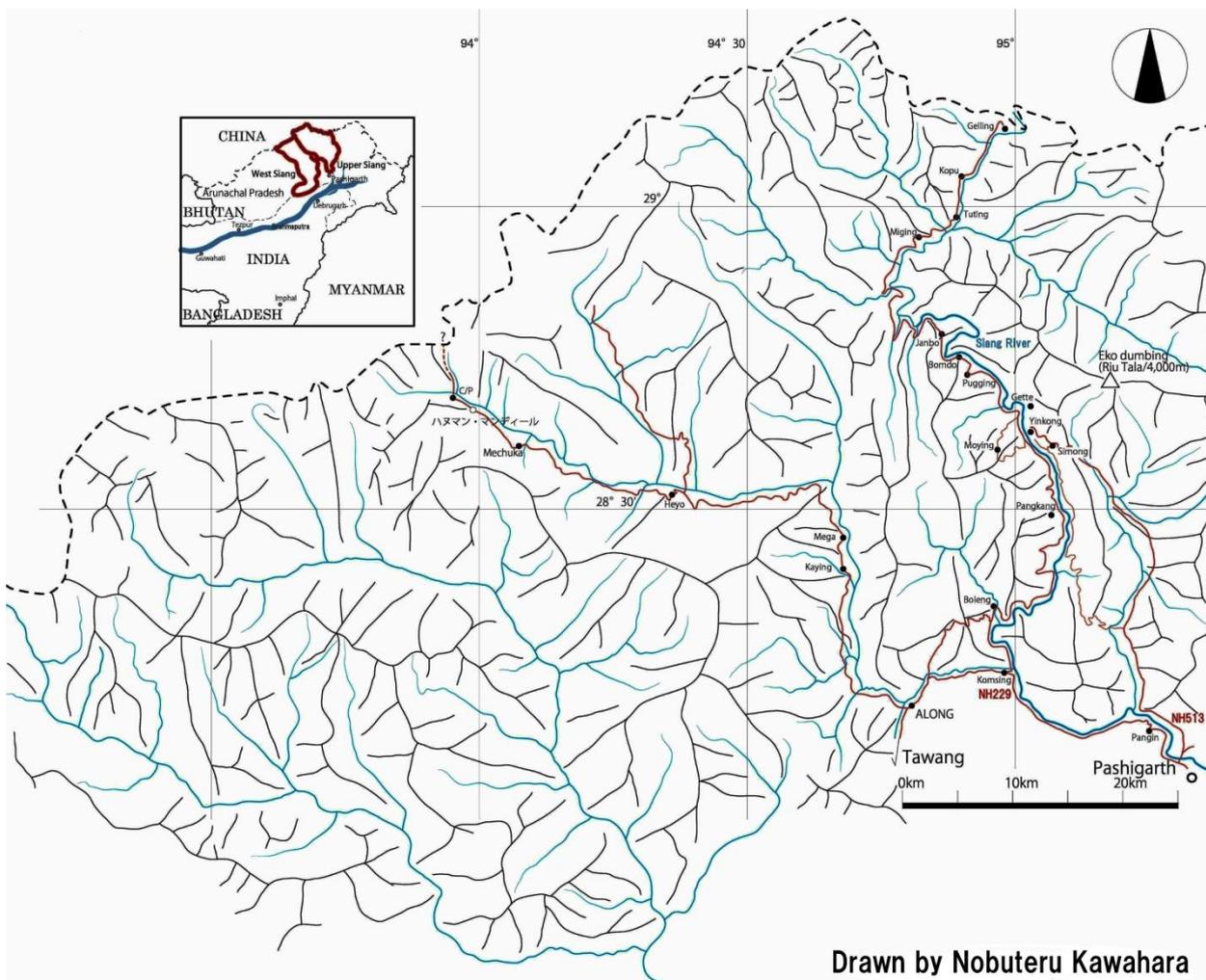
-Again to Upper Siang-

First of all, during November 22 to 28, I went to a little beyond Bona to check the growth of “YOKO The cherry blossom which we planted together with H in a few places of the Upper Siang. We intended to go to Gelling in the beginning, but restriction imposed by the army did not allow us to be there. Then we proceed to Komsing through route NH229 under huge construction for expansion. From there to Moyan via Boleng and we stayed at the DEKI tea garden of Moyan. As I previously paid an attention on the way, mysterious strata were seen on the opposite side of road. Villagers told us that salt coming out from the ground and many animals and birds were gathering. We came across more Mithun here and there than in February.

We made headway checking the growth of “YOKO The cherry blossom” to Gelling on the way. At a primary school in Janbo, where we also checked the tree growth, someone in the school told us about Yagihara, who led a Brahmaputra river rafting expedition of the Himalayan Association of Japan (HAJ) conducted a quarter century ago. A paper cut of THE HINDUSTAN TIMES dated January 1, 1991, is shown on the foregoing page. The villagers were very keen to know of Yagihara and other expedition members. Tobita, a teammate of this journey responded that he was a member of HAJ too and had climbed Yalung Kang together with Yagihara.

Kuniaki Yagihara is now playing a most important role in the Japanese mountaineering community as President of the Japanese Mountaineering and Sport Climbing Association.

We stayed at Tibetan’s house at Kopu. For staying at villager’s house we must carry rice and seasoning with us.



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Indo-Japanese team set to raft down Brahmaputra

HT Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Dec. 31

A 12-member joint team of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the Himalayan Association of Japan will raft down the Brahmaputra, starting from the Chinese border up to the Bangladesh border on January 5. This expedition will be a first such venture in that river.

Addressing newsmen here today ITBP Director-General DVLN Rao said the joint team comprised 14 members besides a Japanese film crew. Mr Rao said this was the first time a foreign film team has been allowed in that region and informed that Indian viewers will see the breathtaking beauty scenery.

The chief informed that the Brahmaputra, one of the biggest rivers of the world, has remained unexplored until 1912 and remained a subject of dispute among the European geographers due to missing links of mapping and exploration of the sensitive tribal areas of Arunachal Pradesh known as 'Siang' region. The forthcoming expedition will explore the mysterious river and will celebrate the silver jubilee of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation's 1965 Everest expedition.

The inhabitants of the 'Siang' region known as 'Abhor' tribe were well known defenders of their privacy and foiled attempts of many earlier explorers of the 19th century, Mr Rao said while giving the background of that region.

It was only in 1913 when Captain Baily and Captain Morshat entered into Tibet from Siang that this mystery was uncovered. The Brahmaputra known as 'Tsango' in Tibet enters into India cutting across deep gorge between magnificent peaks of Namcharua (25,000 ft) and Gayalaperi (23,460 ft.) on the Himalayan watershed. It is known as 'Dhiang' or 'Siang' river in Arunachal Pradesh when it turns north-west dropping into a wide fast-flowing river of a roaring torrent of white water with less than 100 yards between its banks, Mr Rao said. It enters in the plains of Assam at Pasighat, near Dibrugarh, and then assumes the name as 'Brahmaputra', the son of Brahma, the creator of the universe, according to Indian mythology.

Mr Rao said this mighty river could not be tamed as no one had rafted down the white waters from its entry point in India up to the Bay of Bengal which still posed a great challenge to adventurers. Mr Rao said some time in the recent past, Assam Rifles team led

by Major-General P. L. Kukreti undertook a daring feat of rafting down the Brahmaputra from Tuting using improvised rafts. However, no account of this feat is available, Mr Rao informed.

The forthcoming expedition was flagged off today from Delhi by Union Minister of Home Affairs Subodh Kanth Sahay and Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Geong Apang will flag off the team from Geling in Arunachal Pradesh on January 5. The river enters India from that point, Mr Rao said.

It will take more than 25 days for the team to traverse the 1,300 km stretch of the Brahmaputra river and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police will provide all the logistic support to the Japanese and their own men. The team will be led by Commandant S. P. Chamoli of the ITBP with Mr Kuniaki Yagihara as the co-leader.

Speaking on the occasion captain M. S. Kohli, President of the Indian Mountaineering Foundation said the objective of the IMF silver jubilee celebrations was to spread mountaineering and adventure to all parts of the country and the Brahmaputra will provide the much needed thrust to promote this spirit.

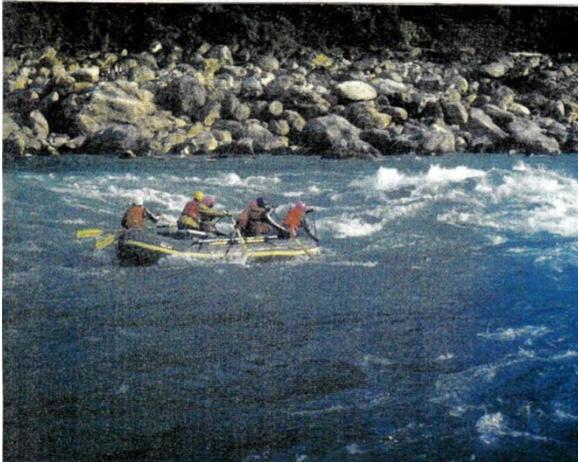
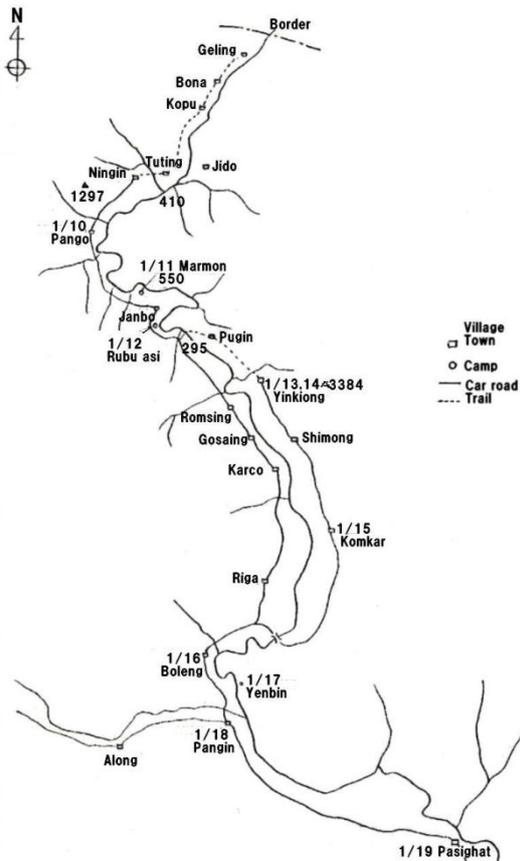
The expedition is supported by the Governments of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Indian Air Force, CRPF, BSF, Assam Rifles and Air-India. The IAF will provide helicopters to the TV team for their shooting, Mr Rao added.



Members of the Indo-Japanese team in a jubilant mood before leaving for rafting expedition Brahmaputra, in New Delhi on Monday. — HT photo

Yagihaha in the right of above picture

Upper Brahmaputra



Though we were told that Gelling was off limit, we tried to reach a starting point of the rafting team. We went to Bona Tibetan temple where we had previously planted “YOKO The cherry blossom.”

Ahead of us there were vast ITBP camp and check post. We crossed an ill-maintained suspension bridge to the opposite side. We again stayed at Kopu. We assisted harvesting here. On the way to Tuting we heard that a large bridge had been completed. The bridge gave a benefit to the villagers as an access to Pemako in the opposite side became easier. We arrived at DEKI tea garden before dark.

In return way to Oyan, we came across a mother and her daughter of hearing impairments in Yingkiang of whom H had taken care. We moved as they explained how they had have been getting along. Later we stopped at Simon where we visited in 2015. A house of the guide at that time was well refurbished with fine bamboo crafts. We went up to a lookout point of Namcha Barwa and neighboring mountains on the hill, but clouds near the border interrupted the view.. This excused us to come again here.

We were told that British air-planes crashed to the mountain near the plain at the time of World War II that we passed on the way to Oyan. When you fly from Japan to Delhi, you will have an aerial view of Imphal, Kohima and surrounding jungles, killing fields of the battle.



Bona Temple and mountain in front is Tibetan border, and in far distance mountains in Tibet is viewd.

-Green Camp with children in Arunachal-

From November 29 to December 3, Tobia and I participated in a volunteer activity of so-called “Green Camp” held at Oyan of East Siang district. Students came from Itanagar of Papum Pare district. This was a program to teach students of hearing impairments an outdoor activity to get familiar with nature of Arunachal and study team-work. Previously only girls came but this time only boys gathered. Attendants were four students of hearing impairments, 12 normal students and one teacher, 18 in total. We communicated in writing with students getting nervous. We set up a tent and

dug a toilet scattering lime-stone power for sterilization among trees near banana field. Shower water was supplied from car. Students willingly assisted these work. They were very cheerful and much enjoyed the gathering.

The second day was tree climbing practice. We brought climbing gear from Japan. We moved to an open place of Anchal Ghat near Brahmaputra. It took a time to teach climbing practice to students, but they were very keen and willingly followed with delights. We carefully assist them for safety. The students caught fishes in an irrigation pond for dinner.





On the fifth day we cropped organic mandarins and held farewell party at Birat village.



There are many Baptist churches

—To Mechuka—

How to kill the time in allowance? Anini would be already snow-covered. Finally we decided to go to Mechuka, the last Shangri-La in India on December 5. In closing this report two pictures are shown to know the present Mechuka of Siang County in a hive of Construction. Mechuka belongs to West Siang district.

