

# Japanese Exploration in Nepal

## I. EXPLORATION OF THE TORBO DISTRICT, EAST OF KANJIROBA HIMAL

JIRO KAWAKITA

OUR PARTY of eight members, J. Kawakita, leader, M. Ogata, K. Nishoika, O. Namikawa, Y. Sonehara, R. Takayama, S. Iijima and S. Omori, had two aims: one was scientific, especially anthropological, and the other was climbing in the Kanjiroba Himal. The party left Pokhara on July 11, 1958 and reached Tsarka (Chharkabhotgaon) on August 4, via Tukucha. On our journey we were much helped by the gentlemen of the Serchan families and others of the Takali people of Tukucha. The influence of the monsoon rain was fairly strong until the middle of August, even on the northern side of the Dhaulagiri Himal. After that, until the end of September, fine and rainy weather alternated in a cycle of several days. We were tortured by the flooded torrent three times between Tukucha and Tsarka. In the upper Keha Lungpa river valley, we found that the so-called "Hidden Valley" flowed out from a tremendous fissure between giant cliffs. No climber could overcome those cliffs from downstream, and therefore "Hidden Valley" remained literally hidden.

Between August 20 and September 5 the mountaineering party, composed of six members, made a training trip to the Mukut Himal and came back to Tsarka by way of Mu (Mukut) and the main stream of the Barbung Khola. In the Mukut Himal (called Mu Khan by the natives) we climbed four minor peaks on the eastern side of the Mu La (Mukut Pass), the highest of which was only 6100 m. (20,013 feet). The highest peak of the Mukut Himal seemed to lie in the midst of the "Hidden Valley" but, hindered by clouds, we could peep from the summits only down a part of the valley.

The area is traditionally called Torbo and includes the villages of Tsarka, Tarap, Hsyimen, Phijer, She Gompa, and Phopa. Tsarka was the highest settled village with spring barley fields at an altitude of about 13,800 feet. We chose Tsarka and secondarily Phopa and Phijer as the objects of intensive study of Tibetan community life.

The Barbung Khola below the junction of the East Churen Khola could not be waded without a portable boat, even in the dry season.

Four climbers started from Tsarka for the Kanjiroba Himal on September 8. They reached Phijer after a week's travel. As a route into the mountains was not discovered, they marched further to Phopa. Yaks were not available beyond Phijer and every village of Torbo was too small to supply sufficient coolies and food. Phopa, a poor and decaying village, was to be abandoned within three years, for the source of irrigation water is gradually becoming exhausted, possibly because of the extinction of some concealed underground ice source. From Phopa, a reconnaissance party started for the Kanjiroba Himal again but failed to cross the main stream of the Mugu Karnali after a two days' trip. The road downstream along the river is, according to the villagers, passable only in the winter season. They call the Kanjiroba Himal "Khan Jerowa." After an exploratory eight day tour toward the west, they came back to Phopa. The approach to the Kanjiroba Himal from the northeastern side seemed almost hopelessly hindered by deep gorges and torrents, and the northeastern slopes of the mountains were quite steep. They chose another route on their return trip to Tsarka because an epidemic was raging in Tarap and Hsyimen. All the members joined again in Tukucha on November 1.

## II. RECONNAISSANCE AROUND DHAULAGIRI II

KIICHIRO KATO

IN CELEBRATION of the centennial anniversary of Keio University, the oldest in Japan, we alumni planned an expedition to Dhaulagiri II (25,429 feet) in 1960. In view of this project we visited Nepal to reconnoiter around this mountain range in the post-monsoon of 1959. The four members of the party were Kiichiro Kato, leader, Hideki Miyashita, Joji Ishijima and Tsuneo Kambe. We left Tokyo Airport on August 21 and arrived at Kathmandu, where many difficult problems awaited us, most of which were troubles about the employment of Sherpas. Every expedition is requested to hire Sherpas only through the Himalayan Society in Kathmandu, which is authorized by the Nepalese government. Many good Sherpas were found in the list of the Himalayan Society, but almost all of them were from Solo-Khumbu and not from Darjeeling. Since in the last seven years every Japanese expedition has hired Darjeeling Sherpas, we had good connections with them. Prior to our leaving Tokyo, we had sent a message to the Himalayan Society to hire

two Darjeeling Sherpas. As we had received no objections to our letter, we instructed the two, Lakpa Tenzing and Gundin, to wait for us in Kathmandu. Upon our arrival there, the Nepalese government put us into contact with the Himalayan Society, which rejected our proposal of employment of Darjeeling Sherpas. We spent many fruitless hours of negotiation with the Himalayan Society, the Foreign Ministry, and Tenzing Norgay of Darjeeling. At last, we met the prime minister of the Nepalese government and asked him to give us a decision. He gave us a compromise, which was to give temporary membership in the Himalayan Society to the Darjeeling Sherpas and to pay cancellation charges for two Sherpas from Solo-Khumbu through the Himalayan Society. We accepted the plan and flew from Kathmandu to Pokhara on September 19 after a month in the capital. It took us and our 36 porters a week to reach Tukucha. We proceeded up the Keha Lungpa valley over the Khok-La, Tiejia-La and Mu-La (Mukut Pass) and arrived at Base Camp at Mukutgaon on October 9. We split into two groups. Kambe and I left on October 12 with two Sherpas for the Barbung Khola, which we descended to Pemring to observe the upper part of the East Churen Khola. Although we spent three days in this gorge, we could find no route up it. On October 17 I went to the Kakkot Khola (Kaya Khola), while Kambe and a Sherpa went to the north ridge and found traces of the 200 or 300 year old Chorten route. We returned to Base Camp the next day. Meanwhile Miyashita and Ishijimo on October 13 had made the first ascent of Kangrewa (18,000 feet) to look at Dhaulagiri II. Then, on the 17th, they had established Camp I below a 3000-foot icefall on Dhaulagiri II. Using 25 ice-pitons and 1300 feet of handline, they pressed a route up the icefall. After several days of scouting for a route up the hidden glacier, they gave up the route because of many snow avalanches and crevasses.

On October 27 we shifted Base Camp from Mukutgaon to the Barbung Khola. Following the Chorten route, Miyashita and Ishijima reached 16,000 feet from Camp II on October 31, but they found no possible way to reach the west side of the inner glacier. On November 2 all members went to find a route up the Churen Khola. We tried to cross the last big waterfall but failed. Our return was by a circuitous route through Mukti-nath, Manangbhot and Thonje and back to Pokhara, a journey of a month.

## III. IIDA LANGTANG HIMAL EXPEDITION, 1959

T. YAMADA

THE LANGTANG HIMAL was first explored by Mr. H. W. Tilman in 1949; Dr. T. Hagen later appreciated the beauty of the Langtang Khola. The Japanese Jugul Himal Expedition, led by Mr. Fukada, also visited the area on its return trip in 1958.

The Iida Langtang Himal Expedition was composed of T. Yamada, leader, S. Hojo, M. Matsushima, T. Terahata, H. Arai and W. Kasai. The Sherpas employed were Pasang Phutar I, Dawa Thondup, Ang Dawa IV, Pasang Tempa and Tensing Girming. Pasang Phutar II joined as the liaison officer. We left Kathmandu on September 29, followed the course of the Trisuli Gandaki and arrived on October 7 at Kyangjeng Gyang in the Langtang Khola valley. At the foot of Liring we happened to see Dr. H. Tichy. (See *Climbs and Expeditions*.) We visited the area with two purposes: to climb Liring (23,771 feet), the highest peak of the Langtang Himal, and to make a geological and botanical survey of the region. We hoped to accomplish the climbing before the strong seasonal winds. The monsoon was almost over when we arrived.

Base Camp was established in a small depression on a moraine at the end of the Lirung Glacier. At first we searched for a route on the southeastern side of the mountain. It seemed, however, to be too difficult for us because of large icefalls and ice walls on the face and the lack of food and equipment. We were obliged to change our objective to Shalbachum, east of Lirung. We began to attack the mountain on October 10. Taking advantage of one of the highest kharaks (pastures) (14,275 feet) as a depot, we pitched three camps respectively at 16,400 feet, 17,700 feet and 19,000 feet. A blizzard shut us in our tents for two days; the first attack party, which had been at the highest camp, had to come down to Camp II. Nevertheless, we sent on the second attack party of two members and two Sherpas. Finally we reached the summit of Shalbachum on October 25 on the third day of fine weather after the blizzard. Though its exact height has not been measured, our measurements made by comparing it with other well known peaks from the summit show it to be about 6700 meters (21,982 feet). We next attempted an exploration around the Tsunga Glacier and Gosainthan, but could not reach the crest commanding the environs of Gosainthan, being hindered by bad weather. Our party left Kyangjeng Gyang on November 18 and returned to Kathmandu by way of Gosainkund. On our way back we observed the southwest face of Lirung, which appears more difficult than the southeast face.

## IV. HIMALCHULI, 1959

JUNJIRO MURAKI

IN THE SPRING of 1959 the Japanese Alpine Club sent an expedition to Himalchuli (25,801 feet) which lies in the Manaslu range in Central Nepal. This mountain may be seen from the Kathmandu valley, and so every Japanese climber who has been to the Nepal Himalaya knows and appreciates the steep and distinguished summit of this mountain. After the success of Manaslu in 1956, the Japanese Alpine Club determined to send an expedition to Himalchuli.

Tilman in 1950 and the Kenya team in 1955 tried to approach the summit from the southwest side and failed. (Tilman and Roberts explored only the approaches.—*Editor*.) We wanted to try the northeast side, which was unknown. (The eastern side was visited by a Japanese and two British parties in 1954.—*Editor*.) In the autumn of 1958 we sent a reconnaissance party (two members and three Sherpas) to find a route leading to the bottom of the final peak of Himalchuli. (*A.A.J.*, 1959, 11:2, pp. 246-247.)

The main party was organized with eight members at the beginning of December. They are as follows: Junjiro Muraki, leader, Yuichi Matsuda, deputy leader, Shojiro Ishizaka, Senya Sumiyoshi, doctor, Hisashi Tanabe, Hirotsugu Takeda, Takeo Yamanoi and Katsuhisa Kimura, cameraman. On March 21 we left Kathmandu for the mountain with a liaison officer, eight Sherpas and 132 local porters. After a 14 day journey through the Buri Gandaki valley, we arrived at Namru village, which lies to the east-northeast of Himalchuli. We had to hire Tibetan porters to carry our luggage to a high alp beyond the village because following a snow-covered track was difficult for the Nepalese porters. There were some troubles with the Namru villagers, but they were not so serious that they could not be settled in one day with the effective aid of the Sherpa sirdar, Gyaltsen Norbu. We pitched Base Camp in the Shurang valley (13,800 feet) above Namru on March 6. The summit was very far, about 10 miles distant, and not visible from Base Camp.

We divided the 50 day climbing periods into five stages. At least five more camps were necessary to reach the top. On April 10 we began the first stage transport of about two tons of luggage to Camp I (17,000 feet). On the 23rd we finished the second stage and established Camp II (19,000 feet). All the members and Sherpas descended to Base Camp for two days of rest. During the third stage the fatal trouble happened. We hoped in this stage to carry our luggage from Camp II to Camp III (21,325 feet) and to reconnoiter the route leading to the final peak. Beyond Camp III

the route was blocked by a 1000-foot ice-cliff; we had to climb down this cliff and reach the final peak across a snow-field from which the Chuling Khola glacier flows east from Himalchuli. As we were about to fix the route down this cliff, we noticed that Nima Tenzing Sherpa looked exhausted and so we sent him down to Camp II for a rest, accompanied by a member and a Sherpa. On the way down, his condition changed suddenly for the worse, and he died at Camp II from haemoptysis on the evening of May 4 despite oxygen inhalation. All the members felt sad for his unfortunate death. On the 5th he was buried in a crevasse near Camp II with a Buddhist funeral service.

After a rest of a few days we again proceeded according to our plan; four members and four Sherpas established Camp IV (20,000 feet) while the doctor, another member and some Sherpas stayed in Camps II and III to maintain contact with the Base Camp. On May 10 we pitched Camp V at the bottom of the final peak (22,300 feet) and the next day four members occupied this camp. In the middle of May we expected to have several fine days for the final attempt, but we faced terrible snowstorms every afternoon. Moreover the increasing altitude hardened the ice on the upper slopes and made it very difficult to fix the rope and to cut steps. At last on the 20th we caught the chance to make the final camp at 23,300 feet, where Ishizaka and Matsuda stayed to try to get to the summit on May 21. It was impossible for them to reach the summit in one day because the final part of the route was on very steep (about 60°) and terribly hard ice. They could not climb higher than 24,275 feet. With our food and fuel almost exhausted, we had to abandon further attempts. On the 22nd we began to retreat from Camp V. All climbers and equipment were back in Base Camp in four days.

## V. GAURISANKAR, ROLWALING HIMAL

HIDEKI KATO

FUKUOKA UNIVERSITY sent a reconnaissance expedition to Gaurisankar in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of its founding. The team was composed of three members: Hideki Kato, Moriaki Abe and Mitsuhashi Oishi. We three left Kathmandu on September 17 with four Sherpas, Ang Temba, sirdar, Kilken, cook, and Kunga Norbu and Ang Dawa III, whom we hired through the Himalayan Society. The Nepalese Sherpas proved excellent, although we had been uneasy about them, this being our first experience with employing Nepalese. We arrived



at Beding on September 28. After depositing half our food at the Gumpa, the lama temple, we started on October 1 for Base Camp on Menlung Pokhari (15,750 feet), arriving there 12 days after our departure, as we were obliged to stay half way at Taika because of heavy snowfall. From October 14 to 25 we tried to find a route to the top of Gaurisankar (23,440 feet) from several directions, but on the north side we could not find any place for camps because of the knife-edged ridge. The mountain was covered with icefalls up to 18,200 feet. We turned to scout Melungtse (23,560 feet) and found that it had several faces of ever-changing and unclimbable walls.

We got up to Hakan La, a col on the north side of Hakan or Dhokre-Ko-Sir (21,970 feet), but we could not climb to the summit on account of icefalls and knife-edged ridges. We attempted to Climb Pangbuk (21,750 feet). (First ascent by Bourdillon and Colledge in 1952.—*Editor*.) Oishi succeeded in reaching 20,000 feet. On November 4 Kato, the liaison officer and two Sherpas were surrounded by nine Tibetans at Base Camp on the Dudh Pokhari near Hadingo (17,700 feet). The armed Tibetans demanded 2600 rupees but did not want any of our equipment. After long negotiations, they consented to take 500 rupees and got away the next morning on their ponies. After their departure, we discovered that 2260 rupees had been taken away.

Abe, Oishi and Ang Temba gave up an attempt on Pangbuk and hurried down from the Menlung Glacier. On the way, at the Menlung La, Abe and Oishi climbed a previously unclimbed 19,000-foot rock peak. Meanwhile, Kato's team returned to Beding and, carrying half our food, proceeded over the Tesi-Lapcha (20,000 feet) to Khumjung, where the two teams met. We were surprised to find that we were reported to be missing. After consultation, we gave up the reconnaissance of Gyachungkang (25,991 feet) and went up the Dudh Kosi to the Ngojamba Glacier. We admired a magnificent view of Gyachungkang, the clearest we believe anyone has ever had. We were fortunate enough to be able to admire Mount Everest, Lhotse, Pumori, etc.