

CLIMBING A NAMELESS PEAK AND SHORT SURVEYS AROUND MUSTANG TO THE NORTHWEST

The summer 2001 in Mustang was about to end when we placed training camps at a point of 4070m and 4780m (both GPS height) en route to Mesokanto Bhanjyang (5121m) from Jomsom via Thini Khola. We expended there a week for acclimatization in the first stage. As was planned, we got well acclimatized and made short climbing to the pass in the vicinity.

On 11th September, we hurried down the way so as to arrive at Jomsom in the same day. On the next day, at the Snow Land hotel right in front of the airport, we were informed that horrible incidents occurred in New York and Pentagon in the previous evening. While taking meal in the dinning room, our eyes were glued to the TV to watch what had taken place in the WTC Buildings, the terrible scenes of which BBC had repeatedly been providing day and night.

The second stage started on 15th September. We departed toward the northern hills over Gnyula Bhanjyang (4077m), north of Muktinath, where we visited on the way. For about five days, we marched wandering along the route toward Damodar Kund, which was famous for the sacred place of Hindu. On the way of the caravan after two camps toward the northeast, we ascended small rock peaks of 5078m and 5211m on the subsidiary ridge of Damodar Himal group to the southeast in order to have the panoramic views. We were now coming to the dry and deserted highland east of Kali Gandaki River, the land of gray brown color and the sky in deep blue just after the end of monsoon. All of us were in an ecstasy of happiness. We enjoyed a grand view to the lofty peaks of Dhaulagiri and Annapurna-Nilgiri massif. A view to the west was a chain of mountain peaks a little lower than 6000m that formed the divide between Mustang and Dolpo. The peaks, which were composed of mostly gneiss, were soaring sharply above the red cliffs of the admirably wind-eroded Thakmar strata. They were equally snow-capped on the pointed summits. The scenery to the distant northwest was higher snowy mountains

near the Tibetan border which were presumed to be the ranges of Dong Mar or Manshail. The skyline to far north is the land of high plateau where the international boundary is drawn and the winding motor road, which has recently had constructed crossing the border, was dimly in sight. To the east, we observed a chain of white peaks with the height of 6500m or higher which presumably were the peaks of Damodar Himal including Bhrikuti Himal. As soon as the second stage was completed, we started descending to Kagbeni via again Gnyula Bhanjyang and the northern villages in Muktinath valley.

On 25th September, the main trek for five days to Lo Manthang began at Kagbeni following the ordinary route; Chhele, Shyangmoche, Ghami, Chharang and Lo Manthang. Most of villages in route have old ruins of forts and Buddhist temples, all of which brought to mind the glory of the Kingdom of Mustang and the land of feudal lords. Chharang is a snug town with broad terraced fields extended to the northwest and surrounded by arid treeless hills. The name of the town is very familiar with us as the place where Ekai Kawaguchi had stayed for ten months before departing to Tibet via Dolpo. There is one of the detached palace of Mustang Raja now devastated, and the monastery where the elder brother of the present king, late Chharang Lama, resided for more than twenty years as the highest Lama.

In Lo Manthang, we camped at the place like a garden just outside of the castled town that was surrounded by poplar trees and close to the castle gate of the town. We had a chance to interview the king, Jigme Palbar Bista at the palace. We met occasionally this friendly Mustang Raja of 68 years old who was patrolling the town.

Being based at Lo Manthang, we had two short reconnaissance to the northwestern mountains. First, we forded Kimling Khola and proceeded to a hill (4708m) on the left bank of Nyamdo Khola. From there we observed minutely the eastern side of Dong Mar (6337m), which had been climbed by H.Tichy in 1953. Secondly, we traced up Dhangna Khola via Tengar village and made the further reconnaissance of the

southeastern side of Dong Mar from a point of 5200m. The Tichy's route was presumably the southeastern rock ridge of the peak. Taththa Jyura Khola, broad valley in front below us would lead to the col on the Tibetan border, which was clearly visible in the deep blue sky of Tibet. The valley also would possibly take us to Manshail Peak (6235m) through a glacier seemingly easy to climb nearly at 6000m level.

At Lo Manthang, we received an unreasonable and even malicious welcome by ACAP (Annapurna Conservation Area Project). They impeded our activities in the mountains by prohibiting any kind of camping outside of the town, notwithstanding we had the perfect permit of both ministries of Tourism and of Home, which legally entitled us to conduct an investigation work in any place within the district. Main staffs of the kingdom and local police, both were cooperating with us in our favor so that we might go into the mountains. But ACAP staffs frightened our Sherpas saying that they would confiscate our equipment if we ignored their order. The happening caused much embarrassment. But we had no other choice than to unwillingly avoid further trouble, and we left Lo Manthang for Lo Gekar where we had planned to set up the second base camp for reconnoitering the new areas of upper Chharang Khola. During our stay at Lo Manthang, we fortunately had a rare chance to observe a splendid scene that thousands Siberian cranes were migrating to the south over Himalayan high mountains. From 2nd to 4th of October, on every morning their flights were witnessed in the sky high above Lo Manthang.

On 4th of Oct, the base camp was moved to the karka very near the Ghar Gompa of Lo Gekar, 10km southwest of Lo Manthang. Our program in this area was to directly enter to the Chharang Chu (Ghyua Khola) through the gorge near our base camp and to ascend Arnikochuli (6034m) by the right upper folk of the river. It is shown on the map as though a snake is raising its head that connects two lakes at the upper end of the valley. However, we were forced to change the course, as we found that the direct route to Chharang Chu was impassable since a mouth

of the gorge near our base camp was not possible to go through. On 6th October, carrying packs of four days outfit and supplies we ascended to the upper plain of Ghar Gompa. We traversed a vast grassland for a while and after crossing a small stream coming from the west, placed the camp just south of the peak 4740m shown on the new map (LOMANTHAN, Sheet 2983-16). At the campsite (29 07 263N; 83 51 383E, 4733m by GPS measurement), we had a magnificent scenery to the east. To E113 degree, we had a clear view of the gompa and ruined fort of Chharang far distance.

On the next day, we accessed to the mountain ridge just behind of the camp and climbed to a col (5489m of the new map, 29 07 549N; 83 50 044, 5504m by GPS measurement) where there were two stone cairns. On the way, we followed a small tributary of Dhakmar Khola which flew down to Ghami. All the members including porters arrived there by noon. A gentle peak of 6154m was seen to W268 direction, and a pointed top of 6280m peak was seen to W290 behind near by the southern ridge of 5932m peak. Then we took the route on to the above mountain ridge to the north up the broad valley fully covered with shale similar to roofing tiles. We had to walk a long way to get to the west col of 6010m peak (29 08 465N;83 48 777E, 5987m by GPS measurement).

From there, I advanced a little alone down to the north, Ghyun Khola side of the ridge, where I looked down two beautiful small lakes that the one were shinning in bright turquoise colors and the another in pure milky white, both in a vivid contrast with the surrounding desert. At first glance I thought to establish the high camp beside the lakes and to stay for a few days in order to climb a couple of peaks and to carry out the survey around there as the place was presumed to ensure the comfort. However, my greedy fine appetite for them was flown away in a moment, when I looked back our porters still walking along Dhakmar Khola, 600m below my eyes and noticed that I was unable to force them to follow the way in late afternoon. I had to descend from the col and joined the band of porters to place a high camp at a point of

5581m of Dhakmar Khola. I sent back the porters down to the lower camp. I changed the plan of the next day and decided to climb 6270m peak that was seen to W290 from the col. On 7th October, we marched up the stream for a while and reached a small glacier at 5720m. It came down from the peaks 6081m and 6154m to the southwest. The snout of the glacier was easily crossed and we traversed it to take a route to Dhau Dhundhun Tal, a glacier lake shown on the new map at the height of 5905m. The lake is not so deep but quite clear, and the surface is reflecting brightly the deep blue of Tibetan sky. After taking lunch there, we climbed carefully a crumbling rock ridge to the western side of the lake. The route led us to a point just beneath the south snow face of the peak 6270m. The easy climb of 100m was taken over by direct climbing of steep snow face for 5 pitches. We changed our course slightly to the left and further 2 pitches climbing brought us onto the summit ridge with a snow cornice to the north. A few minutes later all of us stood a top. The climbing route was moderate in general and needed no special climbing technique. The nearest peak 0.5km distant from there to the north is shown on the new map as the peak 6229m high but no height is given to the peak that we climbed. We estimate the height as 6270m which is inferred by eye measurement (about 40m higher than the 6229m peak), reading of contours on the new map (29 08 41N; 83 46 56E, 6270m) and our GPS measurement (29 08 422N; 83 46 956E, 6357m).

Descending route to the high camp was taken on the eastern ridge to the col, which I traced on the previous day. On the following day we took a rest at the camp and returned to the base camp of Lo Gekar on 9th October.



At just below Mesokanto Bhanjyang.



A View toward Dhaulagiri range from the camp on northern deserted high land of Muktinath.



Dong Mar (6337m), from view point(4900m) on a hill of south side Thaththa jyura NW of Lo Manthang



A distant view of 6270m peak from Dhakmar Khole..



Looking down two contrastive lakes, in turquoise and milky white colors, from the west pass of 6010m peak.



Looking up to 6270m peak from Chay Dhundhun Tal.



North face of Dhaulagiri 8167m. 58km far distance from the west pass of 6010m peak.

The south face of 6270m peak of snow and ice (direct climbing route is shown by red line)



On the top of the nameless peak, 6270m.



The highest of Dhaulagiri Himal,
Khartajung (8750m),
seen from the west
(Dokphola).



Himalayan monals migrating to the south over
the great Himalayan range.
(On 2nd Oct. La Mantung.)



A large number of sheep, going south to Pokhara for Dussehra Festival,
forced to stay walking in narrow square at Kephare.



At the courtyard of Daring Chawle group.