

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

It is a great privilege, indeed, for me to have an opportunity to send my message to the friends in overseas countries. The Japanese Alpine Club (JAC) is our proud witness of the activities and accomplishments performed by Japanese potential mountaineers over one century. JAC was founded in October of 1905 as the 10th mountaineering association of those traditional clubs which have a history of one hundred years or more in the major countries and the first one in Asia.

The Japanese culture has long been able to harmonize a challenge of the demand of religious mind and the cravings that bind human being to the material world. Mt. Fuji is still a token to represent the spirit of Japan that combines the respect for natural beauty and sacredness. A history of mountaineering in Japan originated in the religious quest and is far older than that of the European Alps. It was just in late 19th century, however, that the modern alpinism to place an importance on sport climbing had been imported from Europe to Japan. Walter Weston, a missionary who was a pioneer explorer of the Japanese Alps had a strong influence on the founding of JAC.

The victories of the Sino-Japanese War (1894-5) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-5) encouraged the younger generation and made them have a keen interest in the explorations in many fields. Under such circumstances a monk, Ekai Kawaguchi reached Lhasa through Nepal in 1901 seeking an original Buddhist scriptures in Tibet. Rinzo Mamiya surveyed Sakhalin, Captain Gunji searched Kuril Island and Captain Shirase attempted a bold access to the Antarctic. The modern mountaineering was rapidly prevailing in Japan too, and in 1910-20s Japanese mountaineers visited and climbed the European Alps. The first ascent of East Ridge of Eiger by Yuko Maki drew the Westerners' attention and had them much appreciate the high standard of the Japanese mountaineering.

The first expedition to the mountains abroad was to Canada in 1925. The party led by Yuko Maki succeeded in the first ascent of a formidable Mt. Alberta in the Canadian Rocky. In 1936 Rikkyo University scaled an unclimbed peak, Nanda Kot in Garhwal Himalaya. This is the first assault by the Japanese in the greater range of Himalayas.

The World War II ceased in August 1945. As a peace came back and the order was restored, JAC resumed a preparation and launched their plan extensively targeting

8000m giants of the greater range from Nepal side. A special consideration of the Royal Family and the Government of the Kingdom of Nepal afforded JAC an official permit to Manaslu (8156m), which led to the opportunity of sending a reconnaissance team in 1952. Five years later, JAC party stood on the summit of Manaslu on the 9th May of 1956. "Manaslu" did record an epoch-making milestone to have climbed one of the outstanding 8000m peaks in the Himalayan Olympic and triggered to raise a curtain for the Himalayan golden age. The first ascent of Himalchuri (7893m) in 1959, Sagarmatha (Everest 8848m) expedition that first attempted Southwest Face in 1969-70, Kanchenjunga (8586m) first traverse in 1984, Nepal/China/Japan Friendship Expedition to Sagarmatha-Qomolungma (Everest) in 1988 and the first ascent of Namchabarwa (7782m) in Tsangpo Great Bend in 1992 were most remarkable ascents by JAC in the last four decades.

Not only JAC but other potential mountaineering associations and free-lance climbers as well also performed notable and eminent accomplishments in the last half century and their records had been kept dispatched to overseas periodically through such a magazine, *IWA TO YUKI* (Rock and Snow) till 1994. Mr. Christian Beckwith, current AAJ editor wrote in The American Alpine News of April 2000 "In 1995, a series of sources fundamental to international climbing information collapsed. H. Adams Carter, AAJ editor for 36 years and single handedly responsible for shaping it into the world's preeminent mountaineering publication, died; with him went the global contacts meticulously compiled over those many years. Almost simultaneously, *IWA TO YUKI*, the monthly Japanese magazine devoted to world mountaineering, ceased publication. With *IWA TO YUKI* gone, no central sources of Japanese information were available to the West."

Many of the distinguished mountaineers abroad such as Mr. Nicholas B. Clinch and Mr. Harish Kapadia who are well acquainted with Japan point out that Japan has been establishing plenty of superb and excellent records in the greater range of Asia, in particular, of China. They further mention that Japan has sent little climbing information to overseas countries. It has long been a matter of serious concern of the Japanese mountaineering circle too. To cope with such situation, therefore, JAC is now taking the first step to release semi-annually *THE JAPANESE ALPINE NEWS* to abroad that widely covers the Japanese accomplishments of pioneer expeditions, notable ascents & adventures and scientific field researches. It would be of our greatest pleasure that the overseas readers kindly may avail themselves of this new issue and

subsequent publications as one of the information sources from Japan. Thank you for your thoughtful attention and appreciation.

With the warmest good wishes,

***Hiro Yoshi Otsuka***  
***President***