

Yoshitomi Okura

METEOROLOGICAL OBSERVATION FROM MT. MCKINLEY

Scientific venture conducted by JAC

His Imperial Prince Chichibu Memorial Award 2000 of The Japanese Alpine Club was given to Mr. Yoshitomi Okura, a leader of Mt. McKinley Wind Measurement Project conducted by Natural Science Committee of the Club. The objectives and accomplishments of the project over ten years from 1990 to 1999 are:-

- (1) The principal objective was to study, from a mountaineer's point of view, the nature and special feature of a gust of wind that is prevailing in a higher elevation of the frigid zone. For the purpose an unmanned apparatus for the meteorological observation and an automatic recorder, both of which could operate throughout the whole year were installed in the vicinity of the summit of Mt. McKinley (6194m). The apparatus was so designed as to best suit the measurement of wind.
- (2) Once every year the party concerned ascended the mountain in order to carry on proper maintenance of the apparatus and, if necessary, replacement of the parts respectively. During 1990 to 1993 they found some damages and breakdowns in the apparatus which had taken place in winter. However as the apparatus was improved repeatedly, it was functioning with no trouble till 1999 and the necessary data were collected to satisfaction. Throughout the field activity Mr. Y. Okura paid an utmost attention and made the best possible effort to bring up and encourage many younger climbers having them involved in the project.

The Japanese Alpine Club extended a full support taking advantages of JAC Fund for Mountaineering in Overseas. In response to a keen interest on the part of the institution in Alaska, in July 2000 Mr. Y. Okura surrendered all the apparatus on site to International Arctic Research Center (IARC). An essential portion of the letter dated September 8, 1999 of Mr. Syun-Ichi Akasofu, Director of IARC addressed to the Superintendent, Mr. Steve Martin, Denali National Park is introduced as below:

- a. The Japanese Alpine Club (JAC) has been operating a meteorological station at an altitude of 5710m of Mt. McKinley for a number of years. They set it up in memory of Naomi Uemura, the most famous mountaineer and adventurer as well, who

disappeared near the station. It was their guess that he was blown off by a gust of wind.

- b. When the International Arctic Research Center (IARC) was established in the premises of the campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks, JAC decided to donate the station to the IARC and the Geophysical Institute.
- c. A data logger has been employed to record temperature and wind, and the station has had a regular maintenance service once a year. On the occasion of the IARC opening ceremony on August 27, technical people gathered from the both sides and it was confirmed that the station was duly transferred. They agreed that the data should be transmitted to the IARC on a real time basis. Only a small transmitter is needed at the station because a sensitive receiver can be provided at the IARC; the only visible feature will be an 18" Yagi antenna attached to the station.
- d. The National Weather Service is collocated with the IARC, and they do appreciate and are satisfied with the station as they will be able to send climbers the weather forecast and with conditions at the location of the station. From a scientific point of view, the stations on Mt. McKinley, Mt. Mauna Loa of Hawaii and the Andes in South America may constitute a high altitude trio in studying the global weather.

