

# The first ascent of Yalung Kang

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## Prologue

The connection between the Academic Alpine Club of Kyoto (AACK) and Yalung Kang goes back 10 years. Although older club members had dreamt of challenging certain Himalayan giants during the pre-war period, the planning of this expedition only became a reality after the war. In 1952 soon after the opening of the Kingdom of Nepal to foreigners, Dr E. Nishibori paid a visit there and negotiated permission to climb Manaslu. Since an expedition to Manaslu seemed to be beyond the capacity of the AACK at that time, the organisation of the expedition was transferred to the Japanese Alpine Club. Our interest was then directed westwards and many expeditions to the Karakorum and Hindu Kush areas were organised. Our records include the first ascents of Chogolisa, Salto Kangri and Noshag. Now we came to believe in our ability and the first challenge to an eight thousander was seriously considered. In 1964, I was in Nepal as the leader of the Climbing Expedition to Annapurna S from the AACK and succeeded in obtaining permission for Yalung Kang (formerly named the W peak of Kangchenjunga) in the pre-monsoon period of 1965. The permission was, however, withdrawn in October of the preceding year as a result of the mountaineering ban in Nepal. The planning leader, Mr Funahashi, flew over to Nepal immediately to negotiate with the Government for reconsideration of our expedition. We could not persuade the Government of Nepal to change their decision and a postponement was enforced. Thereafter we continued to pressurise the Government at every opportunity.

In Kyoto, active young members of the AACK held weekly meetings and discussed possible tactics for the expedition. Although the total prohibition of mountaineering in Nepal since 1965 was still in force, trekking on the mountain foothills was possible. We decided therefore to send a reconnaissance party. In April 1967, Matsuda and I travelled to the Yalung glacier and looked for the climbing route. We concluded that there seemed to be a good possibility of climbing to the top via the W ridge to the 'Hump'. We had to wait another 5 years to obtain permission. Many unconfirmed reports that permission would be given soon were sent by various people from year to year. We were delighted for a while and soon after disappointed on account of the false information. In the summer of 1972 we were very doubtful when we heard that permission was indeed coming. On 9 October formal permission for the pre-monsoon period of 1973 really arrived! We were joyful but rather confused. Only 4 months were left before the departure date. How could we manage this big expedition in such a short time of preparation?

## Before departure

Although we had dreamt of Yalung Kang 10 long years, no practical prep-

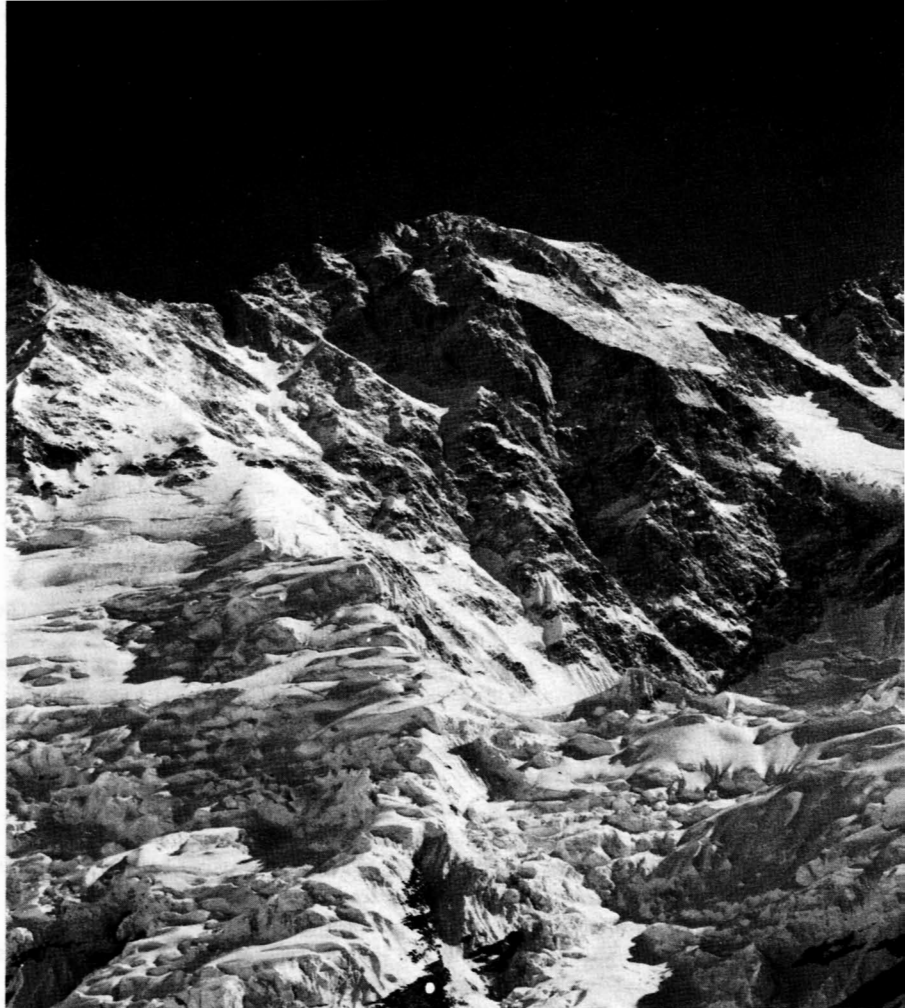
aration could be started before obtaining formal permission. In a 2½ month period, all equipment as well as goods had to be prepared and shipped, and members selected for the expedition, a tremendous task especially with a strict time limit. For equipment and food there was no time for experiment and we had to be content with commercial materials. The problem of financing an expedition is the foundation of all other preparations. We had no basic funds ourselves or other official or governmental money available to us. We were lucky and very thankful to attract donations from many sympathisers and supporters. Oxygen bottles were in part Japanese and the rest French, 140 altogether. Inoue, who was in Kathmandu negotiating for permission, arranged for Karma Sherpa to act as the Sirdar. Most of the baggage was eventually shipped on 7 January. Four members started on 24 January and the rest on 7 February.

The members of this expedition were as follows—Head of Organisation: Nishibori, Eizaburo. Leader: Higuchi, Haruo. Doctor: Saito, Atsuo. Members: Tazuke, Shigeo; Tomita, Kojiro; Yoshino, Hiromichi; Matsuda, Takao; Kamiyama, Yoshiaki; Agate, Yutaka; Asano, Kiyoshi; Inoue, Jiro; Kai, Kunio; Morimoto, Rikuyo; Takagi, Shin'ichi; Matsuzawa, Tetsuro. The Liaison Officer was Daman Narashin Rana and there were 12 Sherpas.

### The approach march

After a week in Kathmandu, we flew to Biratnagar and collected the baggage transported from Calcutta by car. This was assembled at Dharan Bazar which was the starting point of the march. Including local foods required during the approach, the baggage altogether weighed over 12 tons. It was difficult to hire enough porters to carry it all at once. The expedition was divided into 3 groups. On 20 February, 12 members and 350 porters started, followed by 50 porters and one Sherpa the next day. The last 3 members left Dharan on 22 February with 50 porters. All members met at Taplejung after 8 days.

Immediately after leaving Dharan, the trail went up hill steeply, over a mountain ridge and down to the next valley. On the second day, we arrived at Dhankuta, the centre of this area and located on a hill side. The trail followed the mountain ridge dividing the Amur and Tamur Rivers. On the fifth day, we had our first glimpse of Yalung Kang when we crossed over the mountain ridge after passing through Sidwa. It was a spectacular view. Everest, Makalu, Chamlang and many other peaks were also seen. After walking on the twisty trail with many ups-and-downs for 8 days, we came down to the Tamur River, crossed it by a suspension bridge and arrived at Taplejung. The last party hurried via a different route along the mountain ridge which was shorter but steeper. They caught up the main party at Taplejung on 1 March. This was the first time all members had met in one place since we came to Nepal. The camp site was on the top of a hill close to the village. The climate was cool and pleasant. However, it was too cold for the porters from the warm lowlands of Nepal. They started complaining about the cold climate and insisted on going back. There was an uneasy atmosphere in the camp site that evening. Eventually, we had to dismiss some porters and hire new ones. The expedition continued as 3 parties which started one by one on 3 succes-



*5 Yalung Kang. This and next photo: Japanese Yalung Kang Expedition*

sive days, on 5, 6 and 7 March. The productivity of the farming land is certainly not high here and the local people could not afford to sell enough staple foods to our expedition. The quality of rice in this area is rather poor whereas we enjoyed a big feast of potatoes which was probably the best food we could expect.

A serious problem now was the transport onwards from Yamphodin. According to our plan, we had to cross over 2 mountain ridges to the Simbua Khola and Tserum, then to follow the Yalung glacier to Base Camp. It was still early spring and the surrounding mountains were covered with snow. The mountain pass was still buried in deep snow. On 8 March Kamiyama and Asano started to break a trail. On the next day, Matsuda and the liaison officer made an excursion to Ghunsa and Walungchung Gola to hire strong porters for transport on the glacier. The journey from Yamphodin to Tseram was even worse than anticipated. The pass of 3500 m was entirely under snow and the N

slope going down to the Simbua Khola was half frozen and slippery. It took fully 3 days to reach Tseram, only one day's march when free of snow. The bottle-neck of transport was the limited number of boots for porters; we could only provide for 120. They shuttled back and forth and all baggage was collected at Tseram by 10 March.

Reconnaissance from Tseram onward was begun on the 16th. On the 18th the Walungchung porters arrived and the final carry to the Base Camp began on the 19th. Three intermediate camps were established. Although the transport was very tiring and impeded by deep soft snow covering the glacier, shuttles were continued until we set up Base Camp on the upper Yalung Glacier at an altitude of 5210 m on 29 March.

### Climbing

The climbing plan which had been discussed in Kyoto was as follows. We had decided on the W ridge which was tried by the reconnaissance party in 1967. Six advance camps would be required, with the climbing divided into 2 periods. During the first 31 days we would advance to Camp 5 and decide the location of Camp 6. All members would then return to Base Camp to rest for a few days. Then, we would begin the remaining 14 working days refreshed in body and spirit. After establishing Camp 6 we would rush to the summit. Oxygen would be supplied above Camp 4 for members and above Camp 5 for Sherpas; the standard flow rate of oxygen to be 2 l/min during working time and 1 l/min for sleeping.

Reconnaissance from Base Camp upward had already started on 28 March. On that day, Matsuda and Kamiyama got to the upper part of the snow-slope running up to the 'Hump' named by Charles Evans. On the 30th the location of Camp 1 was decided on a branch ridge leading from the W ridge. The bottom half of the snow-slope from the Hump was complicated by numerous crevasses. We jumped over some small ones, while wider crevasses forced us to use duralumin ladders. Many hidden crevasses also threatened us. Since the change in the condition of the snow-slope had been anticipated, logs for making bridges over crevasses were transported from Tseram. Thirty logs were delivered to Base Camp during the following 10 days. After 3 days of preparing the route, load carrying was started on 2 April. On the same day, all members except Nishibori gathered at the Base Camp and drank to our success in the coming struggle.

On the 3rd, Camp 1 was set up at 5950 m as scheduled and Kamiyama and Asano stayed there. Snow conditions on the ridge from Camp 1 to Camp 2 were very much worse than at the time of the previous reconnaissance. Huge ice-blocks, the cross section of which showed nicely layered annual rings, were accumulated on the ridge. For ease of transportation the route was deliberately chosen avoiding direct climbing on the steep ice-walls. At last we struck the final ice-wall just before Camp 2 and with great efforts we climbed it with the aid of duralumin and wire ladders. On 9 April, transportation from Camp 1 commenced and on the 13th Camp 2 was established at a height of 6470 m.

*6 Transport below  
Camp 2*



Meanwhile a Sherpa caught pneumonia at Camp 1. Doctor Saito went up to Camp 1 at midnight to provide medical care. The victim did not recover in spite of oxygen treatment throughout the next day and on the 11th he was carried down to Base Camp for better attention. This accident caused us to halt all climbing for 2 days.

At Base Camp, Ageta and I carried out a survey on 6 and 8 April. The height of Yalung Kang was determined to be 8505 m, which is higher than the S peak of Kangchenjunga by 14 m<sup>1</sup> The heights of outstanding points along the planned route were also measured.

Between Camp 2 and Camp 3, we made a detour towards Kangbachen since ice conditions on the ridge were so bad. After three reconnaissances and preparation of the route, Camp 3 was set up on 19 April at 6990 m. Tomita and Kai stayed there. Although it was not planned, we decided to supply 0.5 l/min of oxygen to ensure a deep sleep to members who slept at this altitude for the first time. A good sleep with a low rate of oxygen supply proved to be very effective in stimulating the next day's energetic labour up to 7500 m without oxygen. On the same day, our old head of organisation Nishibori arrived at Base Camp, taking 4 days from Tseram, with the escort of Tazuke and the liaison officer Daman. We had a party to celebrate; he stayed for 3 days at Base Camp and then returned to Tseram.

<sup>1</sup> See AJ 79 256.

On 22 April, Matsuda and Morimoto took over from Tomita and Kai, and continued the reconnaissance from Camp 3. It was snowing on the morning of the 23rd. Yoshino and Asano went up towards Camp 4 on the 24th and on the 26th they pitched permanent tents at Camp 4 (7440 m). The route from Camp 3 to Camp 4 followed the ridge directly. The slope got steeper and steeper and it took a much longer time than expected to get to the destination which had looked within easy reach. Heavy snow fell on the afternoon of the 27th. Inter-camp communication by transceiver was then interrupted by thunder-storms. It snowed more heavily towards evening reaching 20 cm of snow-fall at Camp 2. Sounds of avalanches unceasingly roared all over the valley.

On the 28th, Ageta and Kai entered Camp 4 and on the 29th they climbed along the ridge to 7700 m, then traversed E to reach 7930 m. This point eventually became Camp 5. Although Matsuda and Morimoto tried the same route as Ageta on 1 May, they could not reach the same point due to deteriorating weather. The first half of our climbing finished at this point, although we could not complete the construction of Camp 5, 11 members came down to Base Camp for rest. The resting period differed individually from one to five days. We checked closely the number of loads already transported and found that the transportation schedule was much behind time. This delay was caused by the tough route between Camps 1 and 2 and also by the physical weakness of the Sherpas and local porters.

To meet this new situation, we reconsidered our tactics. Although in Kyoto we had expected to make 3 attempts on the summit, the number was reduced to 2 with the lightest possible equipment. Quick movement was then essential. At this point, we discussed another possible route following the branch ridge to the main ridge on which climbing could be continued to the summit. Although this possibility was small, we might expect to shorten the distance thereby. We also discussed the possibility of attack from Camp 5 supposing that Camp 6 could not be set up in time in spite of our best efforts. The first assault members were Matsuda and Ageta.

The second half of the climbing began on 3 May. Kamiyama, who had suffered stomach-ache during the first half and had only reached Camp 3, stayed at Base Camp to recover. On the 4th, Asano, then on the 5th Tomita and Kai set off. Sherpas also went up in groups; they smoked fragrant heath-like bush carried from down valley, sanctified themselves with the smoke and prayed for safety in the mountains. On the 6th another 7 members started. On the 7th Dr Saito and Inoue went up. Then, I alone was left in Base Camp. However, on the same day one of our club members, Nakao, who was trekking in Nepal called at Base Camp and stayed with me. In the morning, a huge avalanche fell on the E cliff of Jannu for more than 2000 m. Falling snow spread all over the valley and the Base Camp, far away from Jannu, was also whitened.

On the 8th, Kamiyama got stomach ache again and retreated regretfully to Camp 2 where the doctor stayed. Mingma Noru, who had had pneumonia at



Camp 1 before, suffered again during the carry from Camp 3 and came down for rest and oxygen treatment. On the 9th, Asano and Kai who started from Camp 4 had much trouble struggling with the gale and could not reach the planned position of Camp 5. Tomita in Camp 4 communicated in the evening that their departure had been delayed owing to a strong gale, the wind being so strong that they could not go out of the tent and judging from the situation it was doubtful if they would reach Camp 5 on the next day. I told him to try to send Asano and Kai to Camp 5 with the support of Tomita and Morimoto, together with 2 Sherpas and 2 local porters, during the next day. According to the weather forecast, the monsoon this year was predicted to begin 10 days earlier than usual and therefore the last chance of ascent would come between 12 and 14 May.

On the 10th, as we had anticipated, the wind was strong in the early morning and they started from Camp 4 after 9.30am. At the 7700 m point they began to traverse to reach the planned position of Camp 5 and failed. They deposited loads and returned. On the same day Kamiyama came down to Base Camp. On the next day (11th), another attempt at load carrying failed due to threatening weather in the afternoon. Asano and Kai reached the place one hour beyond the previous day's depot and returned. On the way back to Camp 5 ropes were fixed to improve the safety of the route. Our situation was now serious. If we again failed to establish Camp 5, we could not send assault members for the first attempt on the 14th. According to our initial plan oxygen was to be provided to Sherpas above Camp 5. But, we were now checkmated. A possible move left for us was to stimulate the Sherpas with a heavy dose of oxygen and to establish Camp 5 at any cost. On the other hand, we could not abandon the possibility of the ridge route. If the grey rock just above the saddle of the main ridge located on the upper continuation of the snow slope chosen for our traverse route were easily negotiable from the opposite side (namely, from the Kangchenjunga glacier side), there might be a fair possibility of reaching the summit easily. This might be quicker than following the traverse route.

In the evening the final plan was discussed in frequent communications between advanced camps. Finally we decided as follows. Tomorrow, all loads in depots would be carried to Camp 5 mostly by Sherpas with oxygen supply. The assault members would have one day's rest at Camp 4 with oxygen supply, reach Camp 5 on the 13th with the supporting party and try the summit directly from Camp 5 on the 14th with a supporting party. Incidentally the possibility of the ridge route would be examined by 2 members at the same time.

On the 12th, 4 Sherpas led by Takagi with oxygen supply succeeded in evacuating the depot and reaching the planned position of Camp 5. Kai and Morimoto starting from Camp 4 reached the main ridge to reconnoitre the ridge route. This was, however, totally impossible. Not only the grey rock, but also many other difficulties guard the way to the summit. So we abandoned this route and the attack was finally fixed, as suggested by the reconnaissance in 1967. Transport and reconnaissance parties met at Camp 5 and returned to

Camp 4 in snow. The weather forecast received on this day informed us that the monsoon front was moving N at latitude  $20^{\circ}\text{N}$  and would influence this area around the 16th. The weather might recover again around the 18th.

We were now on the final stage. On the radio that night we confirmed that 4 members would reach Camp 5 next day and attack the summit on the 14th with 2 others in support. On the 13th, the summit team, Matsuda and Ageta together with supporting members Yoshino, Asano and Sirdar Karma started from Camp 4. Tomita in Camp 3 reported at 11am that the weather was unusually settled with only a gentle breeze. At 3pm Yoshino informed us that the weather was fine except for an occasional cloud and that all members were in excellent condition and would arrive at Camp 5 in 30 minutes. They spent 3 hours cutting ice to make space to pitch a tent. The weather forecast said that a ridge of high pressure would pass over Yalung Kang and the next trough would approach on the 16th.

May 14th was the day for the attack. At 6.20am Matsuda and Ageta departed from Camp 5, finished the traverse at a steady pace, had a short break on the top of the snow ridge and then continued climbing a shallow couloir leading up to the left. Yoshino and others, busy with cooking from 3am, had breakfast after the departure of the others and then followed. By the end of the traverse Asano found that his oxygen bottle was already empty and was obliged to give up. Yoshino and Karma divided Asano's pack and tried to catch up the attack party. At 1pm at the upper exit of the couloir (8140 m) the attack party received new oxygen bottles from the supporters, deposited their half-used bottles and started for the summit. The supporting party fixed rope to facilitate the return journey of the attack party and then returned to Camp 5.

The weather was fine as forecasted, and the breeze was light. Their movements could be clearly seen from Base Camp through our telescope. The attack party called Base Camp occasionally asking for instructions on route. They were climbing steadily as before. Through a small snow slope they entered a spacious snow-field of reversed triangular shape just below a gendarme. After traversing the snow-field they climbed a rock shelf running up to the right. Around 2.30pm I instructed them to follow the rock shelf as far as they could so that they could reach a wall, the right side of which seemed to provide a possible route. This route was found at the time of reconnaissance in 1967. When they got to this point cloud came down and they were no longer visible from Base Camp. At 3.50pm I received a call from Ageta informing us of their arrival at the col between the gendarme and the summit. The wind was fairly strong from the Yalung valley and sunshine was hazy. From now on the route would no longer be easy. Matsuda said that about 150 m was left to climb, it would take at least an hour, they still had 100 atm of oxygen and continued to advance as fast as they could. I asked them to call whenever possible since they would take a route on the opposite side of the main ridge and consequently radio communication with Base Camp would be bad.



At 6pm the transceiver in the Base Camp received a signal. Judging from the lapse of time they must be on the summit. But, there was no reply to repeated calls from Base Camp. Their transceiver must be giving trouble. They still had oxygen and by using it sparingly they would get safely back to the depot. In case of delay, they were equipped for a forced bivouac. Base Camp was kept open overnight but still no communication was received.

On the same day Tazuke came down from Camp 3 with 2 exhausted Sherpas.

### Rescue

In the Base Camp we started watching through our telescope from the dawn of 15 May. At 6.10am Kamiyama found 2 black spots moving at about 50 m above and to the right of the depot. They were on a snow-slope one block above the previous day's trail. There seemed to be no way through in front of them. Ageta was just reaching a rock shelf and Matsuda followed him. They were looking for an exit, trying to climb down the slope and moving to and fro. Very fortunately, there was no cloud to be seen and we were able to watch all their movements. If we could have communicated with them, we could have led them safely back to the depot! It was tantalising.

At that time, Yoshino and Karma, exhausted from the previous day's support, and Asano (who was sick) were in Camp 5. The number of oxygen bottles was decreasing quickly owing to unexpected consumption by Sherpas during the transportation between Camps 4 and 5. Under these circumstances we could not keep so many members in Camp 5, so that most of them were still in Camp 4. The rescue operation planned in Base Camp was as follows. At first, Kai and Morimoto went ahead to deliver oxygen to Matsuda and Ageta from the depot. Two Sherpas were asked to carry oxygen to the depot and to fix a rope between the depot and Camp 5. However, in practice, since one Sherpa Mimgma Tserin was not fit, 2 members and one Sherpa organised the first rescue party, which reached Camp 5 at 2pm and hurried on for the rescue.

Ageta eventually got through to the rock shelf at 11.45am and stood on a snow-slope running down to the depot which was about 30 m below. We were very relieved that he had made it and would soon have a good rest with oxygen. However, he unexpectedly traversed the snow-slope to the left and started climbing on rock towards the ridge on the upper left. We realised his serious situation. They had entirely lost their way. We wished desperately that we could let them know that we were carrying out the necessary operations for rescue. We collected wood and garbage, and made a fire and smoke; there was, however, no sign indicating that Ageta was aware of it.

Ageta now started to climb down and reached the upper edge of a cliff hanging above the traverse route from Camp 5 to the snow ridge. He stopped there to rest. At 3.05pm soon after the rescue party had passed, Ageta's pack fell on to the snow-slope 50 m behind them. When this information was passed to Base Camp from Camp 5, we thought that Ageta might have intentionally dropped his pack with a note since his transceiver had been out of order. The

rescue party returned to examine the contents of pack. They found, however, no communication and continued to advance. At 5pm, they reached the snow ridge and called to Ageta. Fortunately, Ageta answered, which encouraged them considerably. At last they met him about 100 m left of the depot. It was already 7.30pm. 'Hallo, hallo, we've just met Ageta. He is fine and now drinking tea from a flask. He can manage to open the bottle by himself.' We received a transceiver call. After a while, Ageta's voice came over telling of the successful first ascent, the circumstances under which he left Matsuda and his sincere wish to deliver oxygen to Matsuda to-night. After letting Ageta have oxygen and a good rest, they escorted him back to the depot. The next task was to rescue Matsuda. Ageta was tightly belayed to prevent him from falling down and watched by Nima Norbu. Kai and Morimoto set off towards Matsuda.

Kai and Morimoto lost their way and went on to the snow-slope following the previous day's trail of the attack party. On the snow-slope they found a broken shaft of the ice-axe belonging to Matsuda. In the dark they looked for more articles with dim beams of a head torch, but found no more. They returned to the depot and were navigated to the rock shelf where Matsuda was supposed to be waiting by transceiver from Base Camp. During day time, a detailed sketch of the relevant location had been drawn, observing through a telescope from Base Camp. Since even single rocks were marked on the sketch, accurate guiding was possible.

According to Ageta, at about 10am Matsuda told him that he did not feel like moving any longer and wanted to wait on the rocks. Then Ageta alone went down to get an oxygen bottle for Matsuda, leaving a hammer and pitons beside him. Even if Matsuda's ice-axe was found broken, he might be still waiting at the same place. We decided to continue rescue operation to the limit of our ability. Kai and Morimoto again started upwards and soon reached rock; their oxygen was by now exhausted. Now the straight distance to the rock was only 20 m. They shouted loudly but there was no reply. It was already after 10pm and more than dangerous to ask them to climb rock under those circumstances without oxygen at an altitude of 8160 m at midnight. Retreat was the only choice I could now make. After the final call to Matsuda they decided to return to Camp 5 with Ageta. Before he was picked up by the rescue party he had lost a crampon. The oxygen in the depot was left for Matsuda; Ageta alone used oxygen and the others were forced to make an exhausting climb down without it. At 4am of the next day all of them were safely back to Camp 5, leaving the depot at 11.15pm. They had a short break in Camp 5 and came down to Camp 3 the same day where Dr Saito was ready to provide medical care.

On the 16th, a second rescue party was organised by Tomita and Takagi who reached Camp 5 in the evening of the 15th. They left Camp 5 at 6am. Although they were hidden by cloud at the depot, they were guided by a transceiver from the Base Camp the same as the previous night. They climbed up to Ageta's foot-prints which he had made after departure from Matsuda, then

followed them back to the place where Matsuda was supposed to wait. The climbing equipment which Ageta left was found, but Matsuda was not. Since there are several rocks of nearly identical shape, they looked round all of them in the hope of finding Matsuda. He was nowhere. While doing this, the last oxygen was consumed. In order not to feel regret afterwards for insufficient search, they devoted another 10 minutes to looking round. It was 4.40pm. Their fatigue owing to continuous rescue operation from the previous day and to insufficient sleep was serious; a double accident must be prevented at any cost. They themselves had to come back to Camp 5 without accident. It was a difficult decision to make whether new oxygen bottles should be delivered to the rescue party from Camp 5 or a new rescue party should be sent next day using the new oxygen bottles.

At Camp 5 2 Sherpas were waiting in the case of emergency that Matsuda was found but unable to move by himself. Also, Asano was in Camp 5 but he was unfit. There were no members in Camp 4 fit enough to participate in rescue. The last 5 oxygen bottles were all together in Camp 5. Taking into account the physical condition of members and Sherpas, shortage of oxygen and in addition, the inevitable consumption of oxygen for sleep in Camp 5, it was totally impossible to send another rescue from Camp 5 with an oxygen bottle for Matsuda (the oxygen in the depot had been used). We had to accept the fact that Matsuda had accidentally fallen to his death after departure from Ageta on the basis of circumstantial evidence that he was no longer on the rock shelf and his broken ice axe was found on a snow-slope just beneath the rock shelf. A 3 days' spell of fine weather was nearly over, the approaching monsoon was menacing. Further stay would only lead to another accident, so the rescue operation was terminated immediately. The last oxygen bottles were given to the exhausted rescue party. Asano and Phurtemba (local porter) in Camp 5 met the rescue party at the snow arête with oxygen. The 4 with new oxygen bottles returned to Camp 5 at 10pm.

The weather got worse on the 17th as we had expected. We evacuated Camp 5 and Camp 4 on the same day and on the 18th all members met at Base Camp after evacuating the rest of the camps. The same evening, around a big fire, all members and Sherpas drank a toast to the successful first ascent, but with the deepest lamentation at the death of Matsuda.

On the opposite bank of the Yalung Glacier from where the most beautiful view of Yalung Kang can be enjoyed, Matsuda's grave was marked by stones according to Tibetan style. We said farewell to him on the 22nd. Although we succeeded in making the first ascent of the long-dreamt Yalung Kang, we deeply regret the loss of Matsuda who was an agreeable comrade in mountains and had been one of the most active promoters of this expedition.

Kangchenjunga, showing routes of expeditions 1973/4

