

Later Hester and I made use of their experience by traversing underneath the hanging glacier and then climbing a long snow gully up the W side of the ridge to the crest and a bivouac. By continuing along the ridge and then round the top of the icefall, we reached the W col, only to find a tent! Much to our surprise and disappointment, 3 Poles returned that day from climbing the mountain. A storm broke out that evening and trapped us for a day. A lull in the storm and intense cold woke us at 1.00 am on the 4th day; as settled weather was our only chance of success, we left immediately (by 3.00 am) taking no equipment, not even a rope, as the snow slope looked easy and speed was essential while the good weather lasted.

However, having climbed 800m, at first light we were barred from the summit by 200m of steep slabs covered with ice and a metre of fresh snow. Unable to avoid this unexpected 'sting in the tail' we continued solo climbing a steep, long and hard ramp to the SW ridge. The storm returned as we climbed around gendarmes on the ridge to reach the summit at 10.00 am on 17 September. Heavy snow and biting cold winds forced us to depart quickly after taking a few photographs, and had obliterated our footsteps and obscured the descent route. We climbed down slowly over the slabs, but were able to slide down the snow slope for 800m to the W col. Lack of food forced us down the next day. The appalling conditions led us to work out a new route avoiding the icy rock ridge. As we reached the valley the snow stopped and the storm cleared to give a glorious sunset.

As winter had arrived with a vengeance and covered the rock face of Eiger with snow, we had to leave the mountains.

Note Brammah's Wife was first climbed by Polish parties from the Lublin Students' Alpine Club on 28/9/1978 and 30/9/1978. The second ascent took place on 15/9/1979 by a Polish party from Krakow Students' Alpine Club.

This latter expedition also climbed Pt 6013m, immediately E of Eiger.

Crevasse danger

Walter Kirstein

When I was in Pontresina in 1980 I renewed my acquaintance with Dr R. Campell, Snr. a past Central President of the SAC. I met him first some years ago when he came to London as the Swiss member of the ICAR (International Alpine Rescue Committee). Dr Campell is now a very old gentleman who, during his life, has played a great part in Swiss Alpinism. As a doctor he has written books about the treatment of injuries which happen to climbers in the mountains. Now in his 87th year he has recently written a booklet in which I found a chapter entitled 'In the Glacier Crevasse' which interested me greatly. It tells the story of a crevasse accident on the Sella Glacier at the end of the Roseg Valley where he was summoned as doctor and as a member of the Mountain Rescue team.

In the *AJ* 1970 I wrote about a winter ski tour, climbing Palu from the south. At that time I used the report which had appeared in the SAC journal but did not mention an incident that happened to our party when we climbed the Sella glacier.

That nothing happened to us was just sheer luck. Dr Campell's report shows what could have happened and I should like, therefore, to describe the two incidents.

Here is the translation of Dr Campell's story which was published in German: 'Alarm from Hotel Roseglacier; rescue party with doctor to be sent at once. One member of an Austrian party of three skiers who had been ski-ing down the Sella glacier has fallen into a deep crevasse. He is hanging on the rope and cannot be moved because the rope has penetrated the ice too deeply. The man is still shouting for help.'

This happened at a time before helicopters were available. The rescue party (3 guides and the doctor) started in a horse-drawn sledge to the Roseghotel and moved on skis up the valley to the Sella glacier. At the bottom of the glacier they met one of the Austrians who reported that the victim was still calling for help but the calls seemed to be getting weaker. From the edge of the crevasse he could not see the man as the edge of the crevasse was overhanging. They did not dare pull the rope higher as they were afraid it might break. The rescue party walked up to the crevasse and found a large hole 4m to 6m wide and slanting into a 50-100m deep crevasse. The rope had cut into the cornice, which formed the edge of the crevasse, to a depth of about 4m. They also did not dare pull for fear of breaking the rope. There was only one way and that was to dig a new hole, through which one could climb down to safeguard the victim with a second rope. Then the overhanging cornice had to be cut away and the first rope freed to pull the victim out of the crevasse. Without additional help there would have been no way of rescuing the man.

When he had been extricated from the crevasse, made warmer and as comfortable as possible and sufficiently revived, he told his rescuers an incredible story. When in the crevasse he had seen another human being—a mountaineer, hanging on a rope. In his terrible condition he had not mentioned this. Now he was not quite sure if it had been an hallucination due to his state of mind down there in the dark crevasse.

Two of the rescuers had to climb down again and found to their amazement a figure hanging on another rope under an overhang. The figure turned out to be the body of a man, a skier, who had been missing for 3 years. He had fallen into the crevasse and his companion, unable to get him out alone, had raced down to the valley for help. However he had failed to mark the spot clearly enough and a snow storm had covered the accident spot. The man had not been found by the rescue party.

Dr Campell tells this story to impress how important it is in such accidents to mark the accident spot clearly and thus help avoid the terrible outcome of not finding the victim in time. He also reports a case which happened on the adjoining glacier coming down from Piz Glüschaint where another tourist perished because the spot of the accident had not been marked clearly enough.

Recently I have heard of a British party who skied down this glacier in winter, unroped. I have been on the Glüschaint in winter and in summer and I am sure if these skiers would have seen this glacier with its many crevasses in summer, they would have used a rope.

My own incident on the Sella glacier happened in 1935.

My article in the *AJ* 1970 reported how we spent a week in March 1935 with my SAC Section Uto (Zurich) in the old Coaz hut. Our main event, after climbing all the lower peaks at the end of the Roseg valley, was to be an ascent of the Piz Palu from the South on Friday of that week, including a night in the Italian Marinelli hut. By Wednesday our tour leader gave up this plan on account of rather bad weather. However on Friday the weather changed and the sun came through the clouds.

Both the leader of the tour and our guide suggested we start on Saturday very early,

not to stay at the Marinelli hut but do the Palu tour in one day. On Saturday morning at 2am our party was standing at the foot of the Sella glacier. It was a clear, ice cold night. There was a track on the glacier. The guide decided that roping 15 people in the darkness would take too long, he would go ahead and the others would follow exactly in his track. We were about half-way up the glacier when the man in front of me suddenly stopped and started to move downhill in the track towards me. Looking up I saw in the dim moonlight a large hole right where our track was broken by a huge crevasse. We had been walking for at least 6m on a rather thin layer of ice. It had carried the men ahead and cracked under the man in front of me, who had managed to reverse just in time. Looking into the hole the crevasse seemed to be hundreds of metres deep.

I have never seen a party roping as fast as our party did after this incident, nobody paid any attention to darkness or cold any more. The rest of our 16 hour tour proceeded without any further mishap.

Rakaposhi from the north

Shigeru Kodama

Rakaposhi is a precipitous mountain especially from the N. H.W. Tilman who had attempted the mountain in 1947, said 'It is not clear why so little interest should have been shown in so noble a mountain, why such a high and glittering prize seen by so many travellers and so easily reached should not have been snatched before'. The reason, he explained, was 'the 8000m fetish'. In recent years we could not climb on this mountain for political reasons—the Karakoram Highway was being made by the Chinese.

We were lucky to obtain a permit for the mountain via the N ridge in the summer of 1979 from the Pakistan Government. The party consisted of some members of Waseda University Alpine Club: Eiho Otani (leader), Shigeru Kodama (manager), Matsushi Yamashita, Hideki Megumi, Naoyoshi Osugi, Masahiro Hattori and Dr Toshikatsu Inoue (doctor).

We left Rawalpindi on 7 June by the Karakoram Highway to Gulmet at the foot of the mountain. We received much kindness and help from Mr Hasmmuddin and Mr Nazzammuddin who are descendants of the Raja of Gulmet. From the bottom of the Hunza River to the top of Rakaposhi there is a height difference of about 6000m—one of the greatest altitude differences in the whole of the Karakoram and the Himalaya. The exciting N face is the side of the mountain most often seen by travellers and climbers. We chose the N ridge route which had been attempted twice before, during the late summer of 1971 and 1973 by a W German expedition under the leadership of Dr Herrligkoffer. They had great difficulty in making a route on account of crevasses and a rock ridge. We found signs of their passing on the ridge—2 ladders and some fixed ropes.

Our Base Camp was established on 15 June where there was a snow covered moraine at a height of 3700m. Six high altitude porters were engaged; 5 of them, who had been with the W German party, were villagers of Gulmet. They were excellent porters as far as Camp 2. Two of them, Marikashidar and Issan Ali, carried some loads to Camp 4.