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## Revisiting Dolpo and journey round Manaslu Massif in 2007

A diary of Ekai Kawaguchi was found at his niece house in late autumn of 2004. I carried on my journey last year to retrace Ekai's footsteps in Dolpo through March - December 1900. It was also a journey to quest for unspoiled and fascinating Kanti Himal and Parchung Himal of MUGU in western Dolpo in succession to 1997 and 1999.

His book "Three Years in Tibet" (Madras, 1909) including Dolpo in Nepal became one of the best literatures not only for geographical information but for a history and culture of western Tibet. Because of his knowledges, he was often suspected to be a British secret agent since he had a contact with a most famous Pundit, Chandra Das, who taught Ekai Tibetan language and custom in Darjeeling.

The Pundits displayed an extraordinary dedication to the British employers. Despite of their precautions and tricks, some of them were sent back, imprisoned or tortured. Even so, they managed to map the Himalaya, Tibet and surrounding areas with remarkable precision, helping the British to consolidate their rule in the Indian sub-continent. Ekai must be very cautious to write records as he was much concerned about the same difficulty and hardship as the Pundits suffered. After he left Tibet, he happened to get wind of news that the situation of Lhasa had taken a turn for the worse. He again went to Kathmandu and asked Bhim Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, a prime minister and an army commander, to have an official statement of the 13th Dalai Lama that Ekai had no particular political mission. At the same time he also requested the prime minister to give him Sanskrit scriptures.

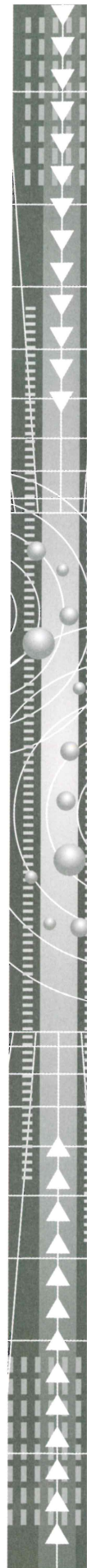
He didn't write in his diary the details about how he crossed the border from Nepal to Changtang. He purposely thoroughly erased them with black ink so as to not leave the records such as names of mountain passes to Tibet, names of places in Tibet, names of monks' quarters and lamas in meditation caves. In addition, he also did not leave any evidence to prove the relation with the Nepalese government.

For more information about "A Japanese Monk and Explorer in Dolpo", please refer to Supplementary Papers to Vol. 2 and Vol.5 of the Japanese Alpine News and Vol. 7 "Japanese Alpine Centenary 1905-2005" written by Tamotsu. Ohnishi.

In the spring of 2007 we published an article on the newly discovered diary of Ekai Kawaguchi' with support from the National Museum of Ethnology. In addition, "Naoji Okuyama and Ekai Kawaguchi Research Work Project" published the diary from, Khodansha-gakujitsu-Bunko. The latter contains a translation of the Ekai's diary from March 10th, 1900 to December 31st, 1901, and supplements for crossing the border to Changtang. This diary led us to conclude that Ekai KAWAGUCHI must cross the Khung La 5411m N29 35 45 E83 09 49 on the border to enter Tibet.

### Part 1 - Upper Dolpo and Kang Tega climbing - Autumn 2007

We revisited the upper Dolpo in autumn of 2007 to carry on our exploration in the



unfrequented areas for further investigation and research. We went to the Khung La, Mount Shey (Pilgrimage around the Crystal Mountain), Sheygomocheng Gomba (Monastery), Sheytsakhang Gomba and Sheysumdo Gomba. We traveled to Mt. Shelridrukta (Rinpoche Mountain) in order to take pictures of the place where Senge Yeshe Rinpoche (Tibetan spelling : sgrub thob Ye shes seng ge), a Shey Gomba pioneer, who had flown in the air and made a hole on a rock wall.

On the 8th of September, 2007 we reached Tingkyu village (Upper stream of Panzang Khola) traveling through Sangdak, Toje La (the Toje Pass), Tsharka and Mo La. We traveled to Jomsom on the Kaligandaki River from Pokhara. Tingkyu village close to the border is the eastern emporium for Dolpo and Tibet. (Western emporiums are Saldang, Namdo, etc.) The season known as Yachagumba (*Cordyceps sinensis* [Berkeley] *Saccardo*) in Nepalese and Tibetan had already ceased and there were found many restaurants, bars and supermarket tents for traders and villagers. There were Chinese motorbikes and cultivators in the village and there were TV's / DVD's in each house.

Two days later, we went down to Shimen. Ekai Kawaguchi had gone to Namdo, Se La, Shey (where he stayed for 3 days), and on the 4th of July, 1900, he entered Changtang ( West Tibet ).

We walked in Dolpo clockwise following Ekai's footsteps shown in a map of "Three Years in Tibet". From some place, however, we decided to walk counterclockwise just like P'ön-pa. Therefore, we first entered the Thangpola Khola valley flowing into Shimen from the north-east. We set our camp at the Sumdo in Changpola Goth, 4 kilometers ahead. We decided to follow a route of the British Buddhist scholar, D. Snellgrove in 1956 down to Ghurbuk Khola through Lung La (Mae, Mö pass) (\*a) GPS 6040m N28 29 33 E83 11 56 from Mait Gaon (Moe or Mö ) in Mait Khola (a West side valley). On both a map of the former Indian Measurement Department of the Survey of India used by David Snellgrove ("HIMALAYAN PILGRIMAGE" a study of Tibetan Religion by A Traveller Through Western Nepal. Oxford, 1961) and a current Nepalese map (1 : 50.000 Government of Nepal, Survey Department 2001) there is a main foot trail with a bridge along the right bank of Panzang Khola between Shimen and Nyisal. However, no such road exists actually. There are no roads that connect these two villages through Panzang Khola Gorges. Presumably a traffic would be possible on a frozen riverbed in mid winter. We took an alternative route via the Lung La this time.

We enjoyed a view in the navy blue sky from the Lung La (Mae, Mo-pass). To the west Pachung Ham 6529m (Tibet) climbed by us in 2004 and Gang Dزونg Kang (6123m) were in sight. To the east the imposing Kang Tega (6060m), shape like a saddle, was demanding. To the south massifs of Daulagiri and Chureng Himal was viewed in far distance.

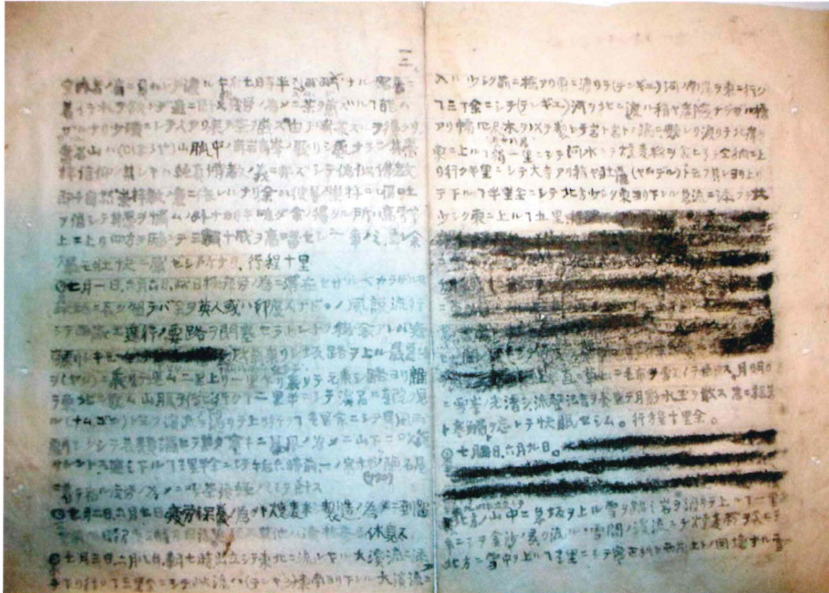
On that day we went down the Mait Khola and camped in Mr. Chabang Dolje's home of Nyisal on the right bank of Panzang Khola and close to the border pass known as the Khung La.

This is a description written by Ekai Kawaguchi after ascending through the Panzang Khola route and turning around, . . .

*It was quite amazing. It's called Yangtsher Gomba. After climbing up and going down for 250 meters, I reached an eastern water point with a strong current from the north and climbed 2.5 kilometers up to the East in a northerly direction...*

The next day, we got to a point some 1km away from a village of Nisal and reached the top of the cliff in front of the Khung La riverbed. The weather was fine, warm and pleasant in

Pages of Ekai's diary for 3 - 4 July, 1900 erased with black ink.



spite of the monsoon season. A valley of the Khung Khola was open and attracted many people coming and going to Bazaars. We crossed the Laprang Penje Khola and climbed uphill a rock-filled dam. This rock-filled dam proves that there had existed once a glacier in the Khung Khola. We saw a large grassy field like a flowing pond. Yemelung Kang (6024m) towered in the background and we saw a road to the Khung La on the right. We camped in a grassy place. Ekai Kawaguchi could have camped near here too. The following morning was cold. The 4th of July, 1900 was the day when Ekai that cross the border into his long-desired Tibet.

We have found certain contradictions between “Three Years in Tibet” and his diary. He didn’t shoulder his 30kg pack by himself. He rode on a yak with no load. Ekai Kawaguchi camped in front of the pass on the 3rd of July, 1900. However at a later date, he erased the relevant pages of his diary on that day with Japanese black ink, so that local people might not be suspected by the Lhasa authority for having assisted secret agents and foreigners, even if they were written in Japanese. That’s why he deleted details of his access to the Khung La.

On September 11th, 2007 we camped out in a field where Ekai Kawaguchi might have stayed before he crossed the border, and arrived at the mountain pass before noon. There are many differences between his travel book and his diary on the mountain pass. He didn’t see Dhaulagiri on the south side. He didn’t eat tsanpa (A daily Tibetan and Nepalese food; roasted barley eaten with cold or hot water).

Early morning of the 11th of September, 2007, we left our camp in the Khung La where Ekai Kawaguchi must have stayed. All of us reached the pass before noon. We saw many Tibetan tents around the Khung Pond (Ekai Pond) near three ponds of Changtang. Many Nepalese came to the Khung Tsongra (bazaar). We met some acquaintances in Nyisal, Saldang, and Namdo. We went down to Nyisal and the following day we met Chilim Tashi Ringpoch of Markom Gomba, the oldest Gomba in Shey, in a meditation cave about 200 meters above Yangtsher Gomba. Chilim Tashi Ringpoch is Priest for all



A view of the Tibetan Plateau from the Khung pass.  
Heaps of stones (Tib.la/lab rtse) with prayer flags are seen

Ringpoche among the bishops in the Big Shey Festival (the Big Festival of the Year of the Dragon) being held every 12 years. We went from Saldang to Shey.

We saw the Crystal Mountain, a round pilgrimage and the three biggest Shey temples before going to the eastern Sela Mukchung Bhangjyang (5085m N29 17 25 E83 01 28). On that day, we set camp on the headwaters of Namgung Khola (4420m N29 17 333 E83 00 407) that flows on the northern side of Langmuse Bhangjyang (5420m N29 14 51 E83 04 21). The following day, we went on the ridge towards the East (Jyangla Bhangjyang 5133m N29 14 658 E83 06 818) and took a rest at the pass. We viewed the southern Do Tarap valley and Norbu Kang (6085m N29 07 02 E83 03 34). We traversed the northern side of the ridge to Chhoila Bhangjyang (5051m N29 01 24 E83 10 44). We went over the



Shey Sumdo gumpa



Near Crystal Mountain a hole of Seng ge ye shes is seen



dividing ridge (Col./Pass) (5294m N29014 192 E83 09 004) that divides NAMGUNG and Panzang to north and east. We went down the headwaters of Sulung Khola to Tokyu from Chhoila Bhangjyang. The day after, we returned to Tingkyu.



Kang Tega (6060m N29 14 10 E83 21 48)

A route on the North face.

This peak, Kang Tega 6060m is located on the southern side of Tsharka village and Mola Bhangjyang (5027m).

On September 19th, 2007, we left Tingkyu and set up our base camp in the rain at Kangtega Sumna, in Polte village, between Chukung (Kang kung) La in Polte Khola (5564m N29 16 45 E83 29 34) and Kella La (5465m N24 14 18 E83 24 22). The next day we went to the west valley known as Tinje (1:50000 Sheet No.2983-10, 5043). We climbed up to the snow-covered ridge at 5886 meters. We set up high-camp at a col 5720 meters. Though this peak had once been ascended, we couldn't find any evidence. The next day, we climbed a northeast snow wall with a 60 meter rope /9 pitches with double iceaxes and climbed up to the edge of the mountain. We still needed a 70 meter rope/4 pitches to overcome a small crevasse. We reached the top of the mountain and descended the same route while the weather was changing worse.

## Part 2 - East of the Manaslu range

### Peaks opened for Manaslu and North of Ganesh areas in 2003

#### (\* Unclimbed peaks

- |                  |                               |
|------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Pashuwa       | 6177m N28 31 54 E85 09 54 (*) |
| 2) Puchen Himal  | 6049m N28 39 40 E85 08 48 (*) |
| 3) Tobsar Peak   | 6100m N28 35 41 E85 00 19 (*) |
| 4) Panpoche I    | 6620m N28 37 43 E84 41 00     |
| 5) Panpoche II   | 6504m N28 36 51 E84 41 13     |
| 6) Khayan        | 6186m N28 38 01 E84 42 55     |
| 7) Samdo Peak    | 6335m N28 38 10 E84 41 49     |
| 8) SweloKang     | 6180m N28 43 41 E84 38 45     |
| 9) Larkya Peak   | 6010m N289 58 36 E80 52 06    |
| 10) Thulagi Peak | 7059m N28 31 40 E84 48 50     |
| 11) Phungi       | 6538m N2833 16 E 84 29 09     |

#### Unclimbed peaks in 2007 opened before 2003

- |                       |                           |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 12) P2 (Himnan Himal) | 6251m N28 31 00 E84 38 51 |
| 13) Tilje(Tilche)     | 5905m N84 37 05 E84 20 09 |

East of Manaslu is one of my fields. I was much inspired by Professor David Snellgrove's book and repeatedly visited the region with my friend, Sadao Yoshinaga, a translator of *Himalayan Pilgrimage* (Oxford 1961) into Japanese. We traveled together to Dolpo, Kali Gandaki, Mustang, and Sama of the Burhi Gandaki River.

A departing point of my journey autumn 2007 to Burhi Gandaki was extremely hot Arughat Bazar. I reached a place for BC on October 17th via Liding, Marcha Khola, Jagat, Philim, Lakuwa, Lenzama, Lama Gaon and Mu gumpa. The Japanese Manaslu expeditions in 1952-3 set up their base here. A botanist Sasuke Nakao, one of members for scientific research, explored an area of Mu gumpa.

Separating from the climbing party I made a long 140-day trek of 1,500 kilometers around the foot of Toje La (two days away from Tshararka in Dolpo), crossing the Thorung Pass from Kali Gandaki to Marsyandi. I then crossed the Larkya La from Marsyandi to Burhi Gandaki, and finally traversed Burhi Gandaki north of Manaslu and to Shar Khola.

The followings are some of essential points of Nakao's report on the above expedition "MANASLU 1952-53".

- A) A cairn at Thaple Bhanjyang (5104 meters) which he reached on 1 July 1953, marked the Nepal-Tibet border.
- B) In summer, Tibetan nomads encamp for several days at one place before moving on to another location.
- C) Blue *Meconopsis* (*M.horridula*) grew above the 4500 meter level.
- D) Yellow *Meconopsis* (*M.nepalensis*) grew two meters high.
- E) A Tibetan mountain was seen from Mura Dajan eastwards.
- F) A huge glacier flows down in this valley south of Ganesh Himal's main peak. These are the headwaters of the Tolo Gumpa Khola.

Shar Khola flows to Ganesh Himal north to northeast. We trekked to Burhi Gandaki. However, we still needed permission from the mountaineering expedition to trek in this valley. In Chhokang village, there was a police permit checkpost. On the opposite shore of Tumje(Dumje), in which Sarpu Khola flows, there were villages called Gumling, Chumchet and Chumgeretc. After passing those villages, there was a road that led to in front of Serang Khola (N28 30 35 E84 51 43 ). This is found after the village of Bihi Fedi in the upstream area of Burhi Gandaki. But this road was blocked at that time because there had been heavy rain due to a monsoon and its repair and maintenance hadn't been done yet. This valley started to spread out widely at Chhokung village. On the outskirts of the village, there was a temple that had MANI. There was a big barley field (Uwa Tsanpa) which stretched from Nakyu, over the hill from a prayer-wheel temple just beyond the village, to Lama Gaon. But the harvest had already finished. We went to the left bank and camped out.

The next morning, I found red roofed classrooms and boarding ghouses. On the left, there was a Ranchen School and Monastery. There was an amazing golden pavilion on the roof. The west ridge of Lanpo Kangri 6648m N28 29 54 E85 09 33 (not permitted to climb) should have been seen from the campsite to the east. After passing KANGNI and a big Buddhist stupa and also passing through a big hamlet between the remotest villages in this valley, Chhule, and Nile, there was a grove with not oak trees or pine trees but white birch. It started to pour and we took a rest at a prayer-wheel temple by a stream just beyond the village. We went to the right shore and continued to climb up to the Mu Monastery. There was a boarding ghouse under construction on the cliff and we stopped by to rest.

Snow started to fall heavily and we set up the tent on the heliport. The headwaters of Shar Khola were two-forked like a 'T' and we followed the right stream on the following morning.

Nakao, who entered the left valley, reached the Taphle Pass in 1953. This pass is near Chamar. The first ascent of Chamar North (Main peak) 7165m N28 33 19 E84 56 43 was done in the spring of 1953 by a New Zealand party. The Keio University Alpine Club attempted and reached 7000m via northeast face in 1976.

Nakao climbed Nuela Dajyang Bhanjyang via the east border pass. We set up base camp on the right shore of Yangdol Khola eight kilometers away. On the opposite shore was Bhajo Kharka, an area consolidated to accelerate trade from Bote Kosi of Tibet. Many Lama Gurung (Bhotea) people of Shar Khola were seen drifting by.

We left BC on the 19th of October and set up high camp at 4850 meters N28 40 21 E85 06 964. On the following day, we started climbing at 5:00AM. We reached the snow dome at 9:30 AM from the right slope of a rock ridge with a 5962 meter peak on the border.

An angle of the slope of the snow dome was 60 degrees but we negotiated without rope and reached the rock peak in an hour. The drifting snow was soft and fluffy like a cotton hat. We went through the crusty snow and reached the line of the border ridge at noon. As there wasn't enough rope for all the members, we couldn't tackle the kniferidge.

Therefore, two of the Sherpas and the other members went through via staccato climb. All of us, including me, went down the north snow wall by stroke rappel to the pond at 5200m. However, two people went through the ridge line of the border but they gave up continuing onward just beneath the top of Phuchen Himal 6049m (N28 39 40 E85 08 48). After cleaning up the base camp on the next day, we went down to Burhi Gandaki. We decided to trek into Sama, a village of starting caravan to go on a normal route to Manaslu.

We took a rest at Sama and went to the heavily snowed Larkya La from Sumbo. Then we set up the base camp at Kasongto Khola under the Bintang to survey the northwest of Manaslu, the West face of Thulagi Peak (7059m N28 31 40 E84 31 22) and the North face of Phungi 6538m (N28 33 16 E84 29 0) which we attempt again in spring of 2008. We reconnoitered a route on the upper side of Changri GL for one week and then we left to Beshishahar on the 8th of November.