



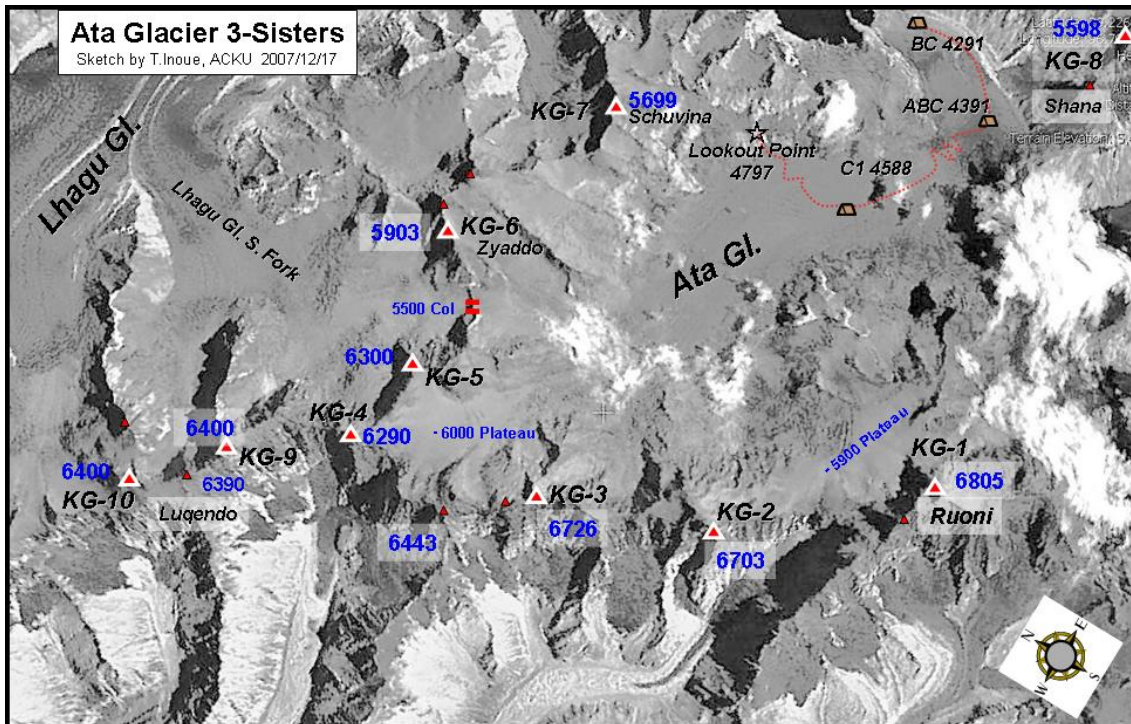
November 2007 Ata Glacier Reconnaissance Kangri Garpo Mountain

The Alpine Club of Kobe University (ACKU) has been continuing to pursue unknown and un-explored mountain climbing for the past several decades. Our new target is the Kangri Garpo Mountains. It is remarkable that more than 47 6000m-peaks including Mt. Ruoni in this range are all remain unconquered.



In 2002, an approach route to the main peak of the Ata Glacier, Mt. Ruoni (6805m), the highest point in the 280km length Kangri Garpo Mountains, was found by our reconnaissance. In 2003, ACKU sent a climbing party led by Kazumasa Hirai who is the **first** summiter of Chogolisa (**1958**), to attempt Mt. Ruoni from the Ata Glacier, but the party failed at 5900m on the north east flank because of bad weather and dangerous conditions of the ice wall. This was the only previous attempt to climb any of the mountains in the whole Kangri Garpo range.

ACKU had the successful first ascent of Que-er Shan (6168m) in a joint expedition with the Mountaineering Association of Chinese University of Geosciences Wuhan (MACUGW) in 1988. Both parties have maintained a good partnership not only in the field of mountaineering but also in academic collaboration. In May 2007, ACKU and MACUGW made an



agreement to hold joint expeditions to un-explored areas of Tibet. They again focused on the Kangri Garpo Mountains that are very close to the border of India and Myanmar, which border conflict restricts trips by foreigners to a very limited area.

The objectives of the 2007 reconnaissance party were to find possible climbing routes to the peaks of the Ata 3-Sisters (nick-named KG-1 Mt. Ruoni 6805m, KG-2 6703m and KG-3 6724m shown in the sketch attached in this report) that were discovered standing on the divide of the south-west bank of the Ata Glacier during past expeditions sent by ACKU, and, to survey each peak height. The heights recorders for each in this report are not recognized by the mountaineering society because of no definitive survey evidence. For example, Mt. Ruoni (Bairiga) has different altitudes such as 6805m on the USSR map, 6610m and 6882m on the old rough Chinese maps. KG-4 (6290m) and KG-5 (6300m) not shown on the existing maps were discovered by them, but positioning and height identification are still pending. We do not know if any aerial survey reports by Chinese Authority have been executed or not. The Chinese Army supposedly keeps the most up-to-date and precise maps of this area, but these are not open to the public. Even though we have tried to get these maps through Chinese University of Geosciences, we were not granted permission to view the maps. Regarding surveys of peaks in this area, we



have also failed to get official permission from Chinese Academy of Science.

In the morning of October 31st 2007, in unsettled weather, 7 members of the joint party, 3 members led by Takeru Yamada from ACKU and 4 members led by Niu Xiao Hong from MACUGW, along with 10 yaks left Lhagu and headed to the Ata Glacier via Kogin and Chutsu. Because the stream flowing from the Ata Glacier is blocked by two lakes and gorge above Chutsu, they detoured and followed a Yak trail which crossed over the Hyona flat. The Ata Glacier has unique topography that flows south-east from the divide of the Kangri Garpo Mountains and splits into two branches. The south tongue runs down into a tributary of Kangri Garpo Qu and reaches to the low altitude of about 2500m. The north tongue comes down into a glacier lake, Cuo Cho Hu (4265m). The base camp was sited on the side moraine in the east bank of the glacier near the lake (GPS: N29°13'12.1" E96°49'11.2" ±13 m, 4291m).

One of challenges in a joint party between different cultures is to overcome cultural gaps and climbing style differences. On the first day at BC, they practiced rope work on the glacier for one day. Meanwhile the route to the advanced base camp (ABC) was reconnoitered. Since ACKU had twice approached the Ata Glacier in 2002 and 2003, the ABC was put on the break point of the glacier without any hesitation under cloudy weather on November 3rd (GPS: N29°12'3.2" E96°48'42.9"±7 m, 4391m).

On November 5th, after two days reconnaissance and route working, the 3 Japanese members sited Camp-1 on the upper crevasse area where the route was opened through the crevasse-labyrinth (GPS: N29°11'36.3" E96°47'17.3" 4588 m). Hidden crevasses covered with fresh snow



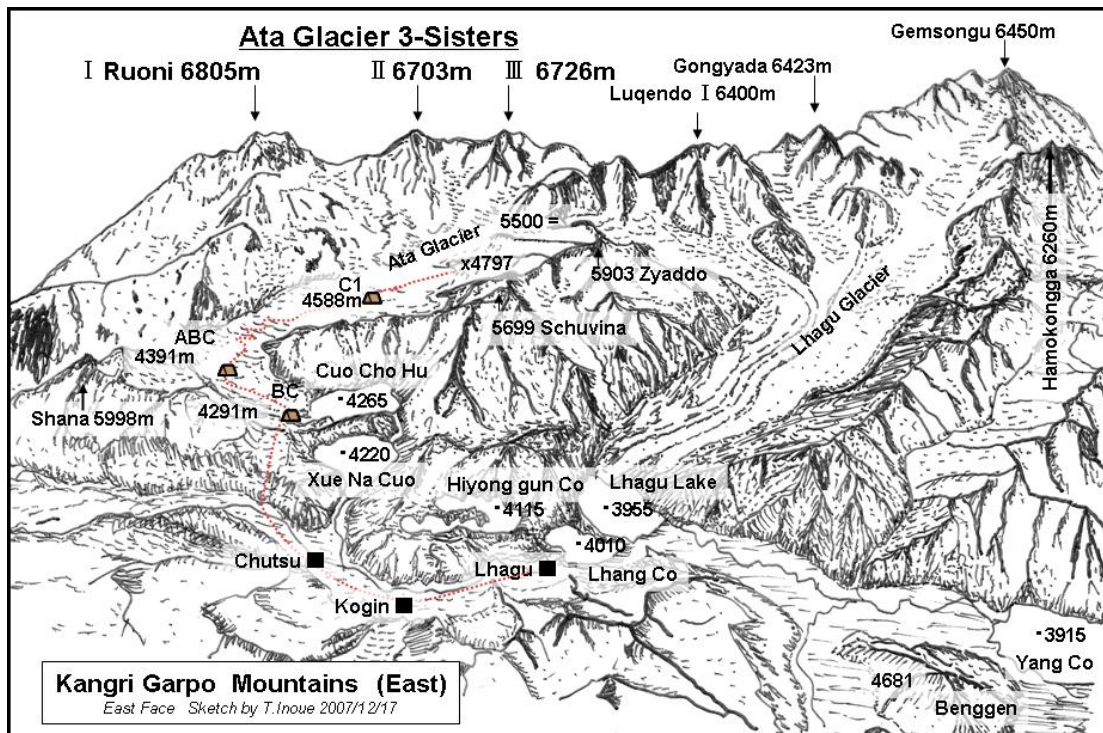
prevented them from making a straight line. They put on Japanese style snow shoes to avoid sinking deeply into the snow.



On November 8th, just a half day of fine weather gave them only one chance to take pictures and look for climbing routes at the point of GPS:



E29°12'53.3" E96°46'44.9"4797 m on the south flank of the north-east divide of the Ata Glacier , the highest point they had reached in this reconnaissance. 3 days of snowy weather erased their tracks in the crevasse-labyrinth and over 2 feet fresh snow covered hidden crevasses. Takeru Yamada decided to return to the base camp on 10th in dense fog. They had only a few meters visibility, but they safely returned to ABC without falling into deep crevasses supported by GPS track back functions and flags.





They tried to measure the height of 3-Sisters at the point of GPS: N29°12'47.9" E96°46'39.9" ($\pm 6m$) 4725m in the Ata Glacier. They used a simple level, scale and a GPS to get a vertical view angle of each peak. The calculated result of each height of the 3-Sisters by using measured data and Google Earth peak position are; KG-1 Ruoni 6900m, KG-2 6650m and KG-3 6700m.

While they were in the mountains, a large cyclone hit Bangladesh and a week later, an unusual snow storm ravaged eastern Tibet and Shangri-La (Zhong Dian). They had expected the best weather during the first week of November, but this year it was not the case. Possible routes to the summits of the 3-sisters found by them, and 2 well-trained students from the ACKU in the mountain were the fruits of this reconnaissance.



BY: Takeru Yamada (Leader of 2007 reconnaissance) / Tatsuo Inoue (President of ACKU)