

## Recitation E

### **Climb to the Top**

In 1975, Junko Tabei became the first woman in the world to reach the top of Mount Everest in the Himalayas, the highest mountain of them all.

Junko was born in 1939 and grew up in the north of Japan. She was a thin, weakly child, and even as an adult she only reached a height of 145 centimeters. At the age of ten, she went on a school climbing trip. The students climbed two mountains and Junko really enjoyed herself. Climbing wasn't like other sports. She could climb in her own time and didn't have to compete against others.

After graduating from university in 1962, she joined several climbing clubs. It was a man's sport at that time, and women were sometimes unwelcome. However in 1965, Junko married a well-known Japanese climber, Masanobu Tabei. Over the years they climbed all of Japan's highest mountains.

Meanwhile Junko started a climbing club for women. By 1972, people were saying she was one of the best mountain climbers in Japan. That year she was chosen to lead a team of women to climb Mount Everest. It took three years for the women to train and raise money for their climb. Just after they began to train, Junko gave birth to a daughter.

Finally, in 1975, the team travelled to Kathmandu in the Himalayas. They found some guides to help them climb the mountain. Everything went well until the morning of May 4. Suddenly a huge amount of snow and ice fell down onto the team. Junko was rescued and she rushed to help the others. Everyone was alive, but they were all injured. They thought about giving up, but decided to continue. They sometimes had to crawl on their hands and knees because of their injuries. About two weeks later, on May 16, Junko reached the summit of the world's highest mountain.

(309 words)