

Junko Tabei, first woman to climb Everest, dies at age 77

By Ken Moritsugu
The Associated Press

TOKYO — The first woman to climb Mount Everest didn't stop there. Japanese mountaineer Junko Tabei, who died in October at age 77, devoted her adult life to scaling peaks, climbing the tallest mountains in more than 70 countries.

Her philosophy was to live life to the fullest. "I want to climb even more mountains," she said in a 1991 interview with The Associated Press, 16 years after conquering Everest. "To think, 'It was great,' and then die."

To do so required defying stereotypes, and a supportive husband, in a country that thought a woman's place was in the home. She founded the Ladies Climbing Club in 1969 with the slogan "Let's go on an overseas expedition by ourselves," and reached the summit of Everest on May 16, 1975, as the leader of the climbing party of an all-female Japanese team.

"Most Japanese men of my generation would expect the woman to stay at home and clean house," the mother of two said in the 1991 interview.

In 1992, she became the first woman to complete the "Seven Summits," reaching the highest peaks of the seven continents.

Tabei died of cancer at a hospital outside of Tokyo, Japanese media reported.

She was born in 1939 in Mihar, a hilly farming town in Fukushima prefecture about 140 miles north of Tokyo. Her first summit was nearby Mount Nasu with her teacher in the fourth grade.

Later in life, she became concerned about the degradation of Everest, completing master's studies in 2000 at Kyushu University in southern Japan on the garbage problem as the famous mountain was opened to more climbers.

"Everest has become too crowded. It needs a rest now," she said at a 2003 parade in Nepal to mark the 50th



ACCOMPLISHED MOUNTAINEER. Japanese mountaineer Junko Tabei looks on during a felicitation ceremony in Kathmandu, Nepal, in this October 31, 2005 file photo. Tabei died on October 20, 2016 of cancer at a hospital outside of Tokyo, according to Japanese media reports. She was 77 years old. Tabei reached the summit of the world's highest mountain in 1975. In 1992, she also became the first woman to complete the "Seven Summits," reaching the highest peaks of the seven continents. (AP Photo/Binod Joshi, File)

anniversary of the first successful ascent of the peak by Sir Edmund Hillary.

She kept climbing even after being diagnosed with cancer four years ago, Japanese public broadcaster NHK said. Her goal was to climb the tallest mountain in all of the more than 190 countries of the world. She fell short, but ticked off four more as recently as 2015, according to her website, in Niger, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Oman.

China's two-child policy won't lead to population boom

By Louise Watt
The Associated Press

BEIJING — The loosening of China's one-child policy to allow all married couples to have two children will bring only a relatively small increase in population growth, a study predicts, while recommending that the country increase its retirement age to address an expected labor shortage.

With 1.37 billion people, China currently has the world's largest population. It will peak at 1.45 billion in 2029, compared with a peak of 1.4 billion in 2023 if the "one-child" policy that restricted most urban couples to one child and rural couples to two if their first was a girl had continued, according to the study, published in the medical journal *Lancet*.

China brought in the policy in 1979 with the aim of limiting a surging population and promoting economic development. It was revised over the years to allow more couples to have an additional child, until the government allowed all married couples to have two children beginning this year, mainly to combat an aging population.

One of the study's authors, Zeng Yi of Peking University, said that it was the first such analysis to fully consider rural-urban differences and the effects of migration when quantifying the impact on population growth.

The study says it assumes that the total fertility rate, or births per woman, will rise from the current 2.01 in rural areas and 1.24 in urban areas to 2.15 and 1.67,



POPULATION PREDICTIONS. Children play bubbles at a residential compound in Beijing, in this March 31, 2016 file photo. The loosening of China's one-child policy to allow all married couples to have two children will bring only a relatively small increase in population growth, a study predicts, while recommending that the country increase its retirement age to address an expected labor shortage. (AP Photo/Andy Wong, File)

respectively, in the next decade. That takes into account a lower socioeconomic level in rural areas and the fact that ethnic minorities are allowed three or more children. It estimates a combined total fertility rate of 1.81 in 2030.

Cai Yong, a demographer at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who wasn't involved in the study, said he thought its total fertility rate projection of 1.81 in 2030 was "overly optimistic."

Lower fertility in China "is no longer a depressed result of restrictive policy," Cai said, adding that Chinese are likely to opt to pour their resources into just one "high quality" child instead of multiple children.

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