

Nepal

New peaks in 2001. A press release from Kathmandu on April 10 declared that His Majesty's Government would open 15 new peaks within one week and 50 more during the post monsoon season. However, after the spring season was underway the Government announced the opening of just nine peaks with immediate effect. This is the first time any peaks have been opened while a climbing season was in progress. These nine peaks comprised six in the Khumbu and one each in the Manaslu, Annapurna, and Dhaulagiri regions. The peaks listed were: Lhotse Middle (8413m), Peak 38 (Shartse II: 7590m), Hungchi (7136m), Numri (6677m), Teng Kangpoche (6500m), and Nhe Serku (5927m), all in the Khumbu, plus P2 (6251m) in the Manaslu region, Thorang Peak (5751m) in the Annapurna region, and Thapa Peak (6012m) in the Dhaulagiri region.



Lhotse Middle, 8413m, just opened and already climbed (see full story earlier in the journal). Yuri Koshelenko

New Peaks for 2002. The Government of Nepal officially announced the opening of 103 additional peaks to foreign expeditions. The announcement came on Christmas Eve 2001 and took effect from March 1, 2002. Unlike the 10 peaks brought on to the list in 1998 (Visit Nepal Year) for a two-year period only, it is reported these new additions will be permanent. Speaking in Kathmandu, Ganesh Raj Karki, Chief of the Mountaineering Department at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, said, "This would not only help promote Nepal as the prime destination for mountaineering but also help development of the areas around these mountains."

Together with the nine peaks added to the list in spring 2001, mountaineers will now be allowed to climb 263 peaks throughout the Nepal Himalaya. Additionally, the Government has substantially eased the financial and administrative burden on many future expeditions by abolishing the need for a Liaison Officer on peaks below 6500m. This means out of the 263 available peaks, from now on only 89 will require an LO.

For a number of years the Expeditions Commission of the UIAA, in its negotiations with the Nepalese authorities, has continually recommended a complete revision of the now outdated LO system in Nepal and advocated an increase the number of permitted peaks. It submitted a selection of proposed new mountains. Many of these now appear in a new list of open peaks, drawn up from recommendations submitted by a study team from the Central Department of Geography, Tribhuvan University, following request by the Government.

An attempt has been made to group these peaks according to the principle ranges or Himals as defined in the Nepal Himalaya Inventory. These groups have been tabled from east to west. However, as no coordinates have been received at the time of writing, it is likely that some of these entries will be out of sequence, particularly those of the rarely visited Damodar Himal, where two Pokhahans of almost equal height are recorded.

EAST NEPAL**KANGCHENJUNGA REGION*****Kangchenjunga Himal***

Talung 7349m
 Thaple Shikhar (Cross Peak) 6341m
 Ramtang Chang 6750m
 Chang Himal/Ramtang N
 (Wedge Peak) 6750m

Annidesha Himal

Annidesh Chuli 6960m
 White Wave 5809m
 Merra 6335m
 Mojca Peak 6032m

Khumbhakarna Himal

Sobitongje 6670m
 Phole 6645m
 Kyabura (Khabur) 6332m
 Bokta Peak 6143m
 Lumba Sumba Peak 5672m
 Lumba Samba 5670m

Janak Himal

Lang Chung Kang 6475m
 Domekhan (Dome Kang) 7264m
 Janak 7090m
 Loshar II (Lashar II) 6860m
 Loshar I (Lashar I) 6930m
 Dazaney (Dzanye Peak) 6710m
 Ghanyala Hies 6779m
 Mdm Peak 6270m
 Sat Peak 6220m
 Chabuk (Tsajirip) 6960m
 Pandra 6850m
 Syaokang 5960m
 Danga 6355m
 Sharphu 4 6433m
 Sharphu 1 7070m
 Sharphu 2 6154m
 Sharphu 3 6885m
 Sharphu 5 6328m
 Sharphu 6 6076m

MAKALU REGION***Mahalangar Himal (Makalu-Barun)***

Chago 6893m
 Pethangtse 6710m
 Kyashar 6770m

CENTRAL NEPAL**KHUMBU REGION*****Mahalangur North***

Kumbatse (Khumbutse) 6639m
 Lintren (Lingtren) 6713m
 Machhermo 6273m
 Nirekha Peak 6159m
 Pharilapcha 6017m
 Luza Peak 5726m
 Nangpai Gosum 1
 (Pasang Lhamu) 7312m
 Nangpai Gosum 2 (Cho Aui) 7296m
 Nangpai Gosum 3 7110m
 Kyazo (Kyajo) Ri 6186m
 Palung Ri 7012m
 Jobo Ribjang 6666m

Mahalangur South

Abi 6097m
 Gorkha Himal? 6092m
 Chota -Ri 6934m
 Amphu I 6840m
 Amphu Gyabjen 5647m
 Ombigaichen 6340m
 Hunku 6119m
 Peak-41 6649m
 Peak-43 6779m
 Ek Rate Danda 6312m

ROWALING***Rowaling Himal***

Pangbuk Ri 6716m
 Langmoche Ri 6617m
 Tengi Ragi Tau 6948m
 Kang Nagchugo (Konyaklema) 6735m
 Bamongo 6400m
 Chekigo 6257m
 Dingjung Ri 6249m

LANGTANG***Langtang Himal***

Yubra Himal 6035m

GANESH REGION***Sringi Himal***

Tobsar (Tabsar) Peak 6100m

Ganesh Himal

Ganesh VI 6480m

MANASLU REGION

Peri Himal

Nar Phu 5748m
 Himjung (Nemjung?) 7140m
 Gyaji Kang 7038m
 Panbari 6887m
 Tilje 5697m
 Ratna Chuli 7128m

Manaslu Himal

Larkya Peak 6010m

EAST MANANG REGION

Annapurna Himal

Chhubohe Peak 5603 m

WEST MANANG REGION

Damodar Himal

Amotsang 6392m
 Pokharkan 6346m
 Pokharhan 6348m
 Gajang 6111m
 Chandi Himal? 6096m

MUSTANG REGION

Damodar Himal

Khumjung 6699m
 Chhiv Himal 6581m
 Jomsom Himal 6581m
 Putrung 6466m
 Saribung 6346m
 Kang Kuru 6320m
 Putkhang 6120m
 Gauguri 6110m
 Arniko Chuli 6039m

DHAULAGIRI REGION

Dhaulagiri Himal

Hongde 6556m

WEST NEPAL

WEST DOLPO REGION

Kanjiroba Himal

Tso Karpo Kang 6556m

HUMLA REGION

Kanti Himal

Kanti 6859m

Chandi Himal

Changwatnang 6125m

SAIPAL REGION

Gurans Himal (Saipal–Raksha Urai)

Korko 6053m
 Khiuri Khala 5806m
 Dhaulagi (Dhaulagari) 6632m
 Rokapi (Nampa South) 6467m
 Roma 5407m

API REGION

Gurans Himal (Yokapahar)

Nampa VII (Yokopahar) 6401m
 Nampa III 6618m
 Nampa II 6700m
 Lhayul Peak 6397m

Nepal Himalaya, expedition endorsements cut, Mt. Everest fees lowered, garbage deposits changed. For several years the American Alpine Club lobbied to remove the endorsement letter required for expeditions wanting to climb in Nepal. This included high-level meetings in Kathmandu with the Minister of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, and the Minister of Mountaineering and Sport.

The AAC received confirmation that on May 2, 2002, His Majesty's Government of Nepal enacted new "Mountaineering expedition regulation, 2059" (2002), which gets rid of the endorsement letters for expeditions. The decision to cancel the requirement was first delayed due to the murder of the King and then by the Maoist insurgency. This makes it much easier for expeditions. The endorsement process was just another onerous bureaucratic detail that an expedition had to worry about. Nepal was the last country that required letters of recommendation from an authorized national body.

The Ministry of Tourism came up with these amended mountaineering rules and regulations:

1. Recommendation letters from the climbers' native alpine club are no longer required.
2. The number of climbers who can climb Everest and their new according peak fees are:
 - One person: \$25,000
 - Two people: \$40,000
 - Three people: \$48,000
 - Four people: \$56,000
 - Five people: \$60,000
 - Six people: \$66,000
 - Seven people: \$70,000

Peak fees, other than Everest, for a team of up to 7 members:

- Above 8000m: \$10,000
- Peaks 7,501-8,000m: \$4,000
- Peaks 7001-75000m: \$3,000
- Peaks 6501-7000m: \$2,000
- Peaks less than 6501m: \$1,000

3. Garbage deposit (refundable) for Everest and Annapurna region:

- Mt. Everest: \$4,000
- All peaks above 8001m: \$3,000
- All peaks 7001m to 8000m and Mt. Ama Dablam: \$2,000
- Peaks 6501m to 7000m: \$1,000
- All peaks below 6500m: \$500
- For other regions:
 - All peaks above 8000m: \$3,000
 - All peaks below 8000m: \$500



A Nepalese porter wearing clothing on loan from a Himalayan Explorers Connection rental center.

Scott Dimetrosky

Nepal Himalaya, porter assistance efforts. If a snow-covered pass at 4500m is difficult to a Western trekker outfitted with the latest combination of fleece, Gore-Tex, ice axe, crampons, and plastic boots, what is it like for a porter using a bamboo basket, rubber sandals, and cotton trousers? Ill-equipped porters have risked life and limb for the equivalent price of a pint of beer, suffering miserable conditions in the Himalaya, which can result in injury or death. In response, the Himalayan Explorers Connection (HEC), working in partnership with the International Porter Protection Group and Porters' Progress (an initiative of the HEC and a Nepalese registered NGO) has established the HEC Porter Assistance Project. The project seeks to accomplish a number of objectives:

1. To provide independent trekkers and small trekking companies with a convenient and inexpensive means of equipping their porters.
2. To educate the tourist population about acceptable standards of porter treatment.
3. To motivate and empower porters to determine their own means of assistance through offering English language, first aid, and empowerment classes.

Our Kathmandu and Lukla offices (with plans to expand to other Himalayan areas) stockpile water- and wind-resistant jackets and pants, quick-drying synthetic base layers, gloves, socks, hats, sunglasses, and footwear. The equipment donated from manufacturers, ski resorts, and individuals can be borrowed for porters by trekkers and small trekking companies in exchange for a small, refundable deposit. If you would like to donate clothing to the program after a trek in Nepal, drop it off at the HEC Kathmandu office in Thamel, next to the KEEP office on Jyatha (tel: 259 275). To make a similar donation in the USA, contact HEC at ken@hec.org.

The Himalayan Explorers Connection is a non-profit organization with a mission to promote a better understanding of and respect for the environment and cultures of the Himalayan region. The HEC coordinates education, assistance, and cross-cultural experiences for members, volunteers, trekkers, and Himalayan residents. To learn more about this project and other HEC programs please visit our site at www.hec.org or send email to info@hec.org.

SCOTT DIMETROSKY, *Executive Director of HEC, and* KEN STOBBER, *Volunteer Development Director and coordinator of programs for the HEC Porter Assistance*

GURANS HIMAL

Api, ascent. This rarely visited 7132m peak was climbed on October 6 and 8 by five members of Ayumi Nozawai's six-man Japanese team. The climbers, all members of the Barbarian Club, established base camp at 4000m in the Api Khola and then repeated the route up the northwest face taken by the original Japanese ascensionists in 1960. Three camps were established and the

summiteers were Hirotaka Imamura and Nozawai (on the 6th) and Tomoyuki Furuya, Hiroshi Iwazaki, and Fumihiro Ogiwara (on the 8th). This may be only the second or third ascent of the Original Route (the exact line followed by the successful Korean-Sherpa team in 1991 is unknown).

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Raksha Urai, attempt. Hubert Fritzenwaller's five-man Austrian expedition failed at ca 5800m on one of Raksha Urai's unclimbed summits (assumed to be the Rakshi Urai III as mentioned by the British party below). The team gave up on the east face in mid-May.

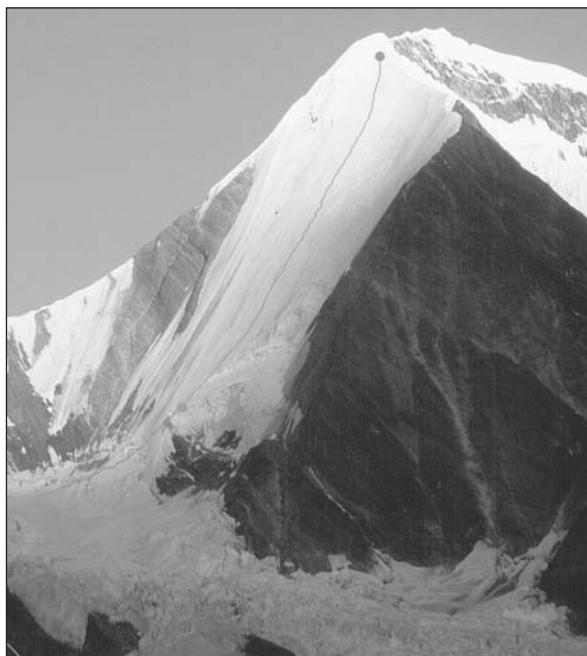
ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Raksha Urai, attempt. During the post monsoon Phil Amos, Jim de Bank, myself and Simon Woods (all UK) together with Bryan Godfrey (New Zealand), and Graham Rowbotham (Canada) explored part of Far West Nepal with the intention of making the first ascent of Raksha Urai (6593m). The team travelled for three days by bus from Kathmandu to the road head near Deura, then walked for 12 days up the Seti Valley. This area has been rarely visited by Westerners, with only one trekking group and three previous expeditions known. All previous expeditions to Raksha Urai have been turned back by poor conditions low down on the mountain.

Base camp was situated on the east side of the range at 4100m, with easy access to all four of the Raksha Urai peaks. The weather throughout was perfect and progress was relatively rapid for the first week. The team elected to try Raksha Urai III, which had also been singled out by the previous expeditions (who refer to it as Raksha Urai IV) The most likely route of ascent was the east flank and the 900m southeast face.

After a period of acclimatisation and load carrying up to 5400m, Amos, Rowbotham, Woods and I set out for an attempt on the mountain, while de Bank and Godfrey elected to explore the western flank up the Salimor Khola. The latter pair were turned back by an impenetrable gorge on the second day, but it was felt that if a way could be found up the valley, access to the higher peaks would be very good.

On October 8, we four left base camp and climbed to a 5000m advanced base situated at



Raksha Urai III closer up. The slope is 60 degrees, and the high point was 6500m. Adam Thomas

the start of the glacier. On the 9th we arrived at Camp 1, where we had previously cached loads. We spent the following day carrying and acclimatizing up to a cache at 5800m. On the 11th we all climbed easy ground to a high camp at 5900m, situated on a large serac about 100m up the southeast face. We spent the rest of the day resting and acclimatizing. However, a small storm then delayed the summit attempt for a further day. Meanwhile de Bank and Godfrey had returned from their explorations and were coming up to join us, just one day behind.

At 3 a.m. on the 13th the four of us set out for the summit. After climbing for 13 hours up continuous 60-degree ice of varying quality, we hit deep, unconsolidated snow just 50 meters from the summit ridge. There was evidence of an avalanche to our right and as we had not been able to stop on the face for food or liquid, we decided it was best to descend. We estimated that we were less than 150 meters from the summit, reaching a height of 6500m (set by GPS fix).

A difficult night followed. It took nine hours to make the 12 rappels of 60 meters each necessary to descend, using mainly Abalakov Threads and ice screw anchors. Temperatures dropped to -20°C and we had major problems with ice screws freezing up. At 1:00 a.m. on the 14th we were finally greeted at our high camp by de Bank and Godfrey.

Realizing that under the present conditions we were not able to climb the mountain, all six of us retreated to base camp and spent the next week recovering and exploring. During this period we made possibly the first western visit to the Urai Lagna (5200m), a pass on the Tibetan border. We walked out to Chainpur from October 22-30 and flew from there to Kathmandu.

The 1997 German expedition defined the range as having six peaks, which they numbered from south to north as Raksha Urai I to VI. However, we are convinced the peak referred to by the Germans as Raksha Urai I is in fact Dhaulagiri/Dhaulasiri or certainly part of the Dhaulagiri Group, as it is not visible from the main valley and is separated from the other Raksha Urai peaks by a considerable distance. Also, Raksha Urai VI referred to by the Germans is, in our opinion, yet another separate mountain a little north and some way east of the main



Raksha Urai III. The team estimates (via GPS positioning) that they were within 50 meters of the summit ridge and less than 150 meters from the summit when they turned around due to avalanche danger. *Adam Thomas*

range. We therefore suggest the most logical nomenclature for the Raksha Urai Group to be four peaks (I to IV) from south to north, so the Germans' II now becomes I, etc. We also feel that Raksha Urai III, which we attempted, is higher than the quoted 6593m for Raksha Urai and more like 6650m.

All four peaks of Raksha Urai would make for superb high-standard alpinism in a beautiful and remote area. There are also other possibilities in the region, although any trip would necessarily be a long and serious undertaking. More information can be obtained from myself at adamclimb@btinternet.com or from our website at www.virginsummits.org. The expedition won both the Helly Hansen Mountain Adventure and the Lyon Equipment awards in 2001.

ADAM THOMAS, *United Kingdom*

Dhaulagiri, ascents, attempts, and tragedies. On October 12 the Spanish climber, José Antonio 'Pepe' Garces, the leader of a small Spanish-Italian expedition to the Normal Route up the northeast ridge, was killed when he fell to his death from ca 8050m on the summit ridge. His body could not be recovered. On the same day his fellow team member, Silvio Mondinelli, reached the summit. (*Editor's note: 44-year-old Garces was a prolific 8,000m collector and just a few months previously had summited K2. Prior to this he had climbed Everest in 1991, Cho Oyu in 1997, Gasherbrum I and II within one week during 1999, and Manaslu in 2000. He had also reached the Central Summit of Shishapangma.*)

On the much more difficult east face, which has only been climbed by nine people, three Japanese disappeared sometime after October 14. The four-member team first went to the northeast ridge to acclimatise and Hideji Nazuka continued to the summit on his own, reaching the top on the 11th. His fingers became frostbitten and he immediately left the mountain. Forty-six-year-old Nazuka has now climbed nine of the 8,000m peaks, with some of these achieved by outstanding routes, such as the first winter ascent of the southwest face of Everest (1993; his second ascent of Everest), the first ascent of the northwest face of K2 (1990), and the northeast ridge of Kangchenjunga (1991). The remaining three climbers, Masashi Fukumoto, Ryushi Hoshino, and Yukihiro Shinagawa, moved down to the base of the huge east face, which they hoped to climb to an exit on to the northeast ridge at 7500m.

The trio were watched by another Japanese party led by Ryoji Yamada. This party was actually part of the same expedition as Hoshino and friends but Yamada's team had no intention of attempting the east face. Team members saw the east face climbers start up early in the morning of the 12th with three days' food. They later saw them make two bivouacs. Yamada himself watched them on the third day, the 14th, and reported that at 10:00 a.m. they had only reached 6400m or 6500m. "They were moving very slowly, were very tired and not in good condition," he observed. If Hoshino and team-mates had managed to reach the ridge at 7500m as planned, they would probably have been alright, as Yamada had left a camp there for them, stocked with a good supply of food.

Yamada and his party departed base camp on the 16th, leaving only a cook. The latter came back to Kathmandu alone on the 22nd or 23rd and told the trekking agent that the Japanese had not returned. He also added that on the 18th and 19th there had been very heavy snowfall with strong winds around the summit. Yamada was still in Kathmandu when the cook returned and on the 24th he flew by helicopter to Dhaulagiri to search for the missing men. From the air Yamada could see no trace of the climbers nor any signs of avalanching on the face. He concluded that they must have fallen before they reached his ridge camp. Hoshino was 33

and one of the more renowned climbers from Japan with the southwest face of Everest, Cho Oyu, Gasherbrum I and II, and the first ascent of Ultar to his credit.

A third Japanese expedition led by Kiyoshi Ishii was also on the mountain and climbed the northeast ridge. Ishii reported in Kathmandu that two of his members and three Sherpas had reached the summit on October 2, the Sherpas saying that the point reached was the correct summit. However, they, like other climbers before them, were wrong. They had actually reached a false summit. A German woman, Ms. Barbara Hirschbichler, went to the same point at the same time. She said that she had seen a higher point to the west but at the time believed the Japanese team's Sherpas, who said no one went to the other (but true) summit. She therefore did not try to climb it (if she had it would have meant retracing some of her ascent route and then taking a different line, as it is very difficult to climb directly to the main top from the false summit). She was extremely disappointed to learn later that she had been given incorrect information.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY AND TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Thapa, first official ascent. A French team led by Raphael Guilbert went to Thapa, the least important of the nine new peaks opened by the Nepalese authorities in mid-May. This 6012m peak lies just north of Dhaulagiri I and Tukuiche, and is really no more than another bump on a mountain widely known as Dhampus. On October 28 the French made the first officially recognised ascent by its western slopes. From their base camp at 5080m in the Hidden Valley six summiteers took seven hours to make what they reported as an easy walk with a little snow at the top. When they returned to the Hidden Valley, they met several parties of trekkers who intended to climb Thapa. They also learned from their own Sherpas that it is not at all unusual for trekkers to climb it. The French felt they had been fooled into paying the Government a royalty fee of \$1,500 for a peak that others go to free of charge.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

PERI HIMAL

Himlung Himal, second ascent, first ski descent. Our international expedition (French-Swedish-Algerian), which took place from April 15-June 10, comprised amateur climbers from the Grenoble-Oisans section of the French Alpine Club. The summit of Himlung Himal (7126m) had only been reached once before, by a team of Japanese climbers and Nepalese police officers in 1992. Since that time there have only been two other attempts: Germans in 1999 and Spanish in 2000. In common with all these expeditions, our route was also the northwest ridge.

On May 14 Béatrice Poupard, Kouid Beladem, Carole Soubiran, Sirdar Mulal Gurung, and I reached the summit. On May 19, Jean-Marie Gentzbittel, Ariane Chatelet, Eskil Eriksson, Fabrice Pintonato, and Olivier Soudieu also climbed to the top. Eriksson made the first ski descent from the summit.

The ascent of Himlung Himal turned out to be more complicated than we expected. Base camp (4850m) was reached after a nine-day march from Besisahar, leaving the Annapurna Trek at Koto. From there the ascent to Camp I (5400m) could be made in tennis shoes during dry weather, but from Camp I to Camp II (6200m), the glacier was a labyrinth of crevasses and ser-

acs. It was difficult to find the best way. About 150 meters of fixed rope was installed in order to facilitate the negotiation of crevasses and 45-degree slopes. After Camp II, the route followed a long ridge for four or five hours toward the final pyramid. Despite the lack of technical difficulties, the length of this ridge made both the ascent and descent rather strenuous.

After an unsuccessful attempt to reach the summit from Camp II on May 10, Camp III was installed on the ridge about one hour from the start of the final pyramid. The last 800 vertical meters never exceeded 30 degrees and offered no particular technical difficulties, though snow conditions were certainly not perfect (deep snow with some avalanche risk).

Camp II and III were totally dismantled by expedition members, and before leaving base camp two or three porters were hired to bring some equipment down from Camp I. In addition to the mountaineering experience, the team had the pleasure of “discovering” the remote valley of Nar and the village of Phu with its Tibetan culture.

PAUL CAMPION, *French Alpine Club*

MANASLU HIMAL

Manaslu, southeast face to east ridge, first ascent. A large Ukrainian expedition, marking the 10th anniversary of the country’s independence in 1991, had as its objectives a new route up the southeast face of Manaslu (8163m) and the first ascent of P2 (6251m a.k.a. Simnag Himal East) immediately south of Manaslu. The expedition, led by Valentyn Symonenko, comprised 15 members, 10 of which were the most skilful climbers in the Ukraine.

Base camp was set up at 4000m and all the equipment transported there by helicopter. We began work on April 8, following the line of a relatively safe spur on the right side of the face to reach the upper east ridge (this spur lies to the right of the previous attempts by Poles, Kazakhs and Ukrainians in past years). From advanced base at 5000m to Camp 5 at 7300m ca 4000m of rope was fixed. Intermediate camps, which were in snow caves, were established at 5500m, 6000m, 6400m, and 6800m. The average angle of the spur was 55 degrees, but there were more difficult sections of 60 degrees to 80 degrees, particularly between Camps 1 and 3 and between Camps 4 and 5. These involved consistently tricky mixed climbing on rock thinly covered with powder snow. Finally, Camp 6 was placed at ca 7500m near the top of the ridge and a little distance below the Pinnacle or East Summit of Manaslu.

On May 19 the summit party climbed the ridge to 7650m but could not climb over the Pinnacle or outflank it on the left due to the very steep terrain and a heavy covering of snow. The following day Vadym Leontyev, Sergiy Kovalov Sergiy Pugachov, and Vladyslav Terzyul climbed around to the right of the Pinnacle and reached the summit plateau at ca 7500m. On May 21 these four stayed in their tents, as the weather was stormy with driving snow and no visibility. Kovalov, Leontyev, and Terzyul left the tent at 6:00 a.m. and reached the summit of Manaslu at 11 a.m. The ascent was made without oxygen and the route as a whole graded Russian 6B. The same day all four climbers descended to 6300m and reached Samagon on the 24th. They were flown back to Kathmandu by helicopter.

MSTYSLAV GORBENKO, *Ukraine*

P2, first ascent. As noted above, one of the aims of the Ukrainian expedition to Manaslu was to make the first ascent of P2 (6251m a.k.a. Simnag Himal East), a minor summit along the east ridge of Ngadi Chuli (7871m a.k.a. Peak 29) immediately south of Manaslu. Getting permission to climb P2 was very difficult, as the peak was only brought on to the permitted list part way through the season. It was necessary for the President of the Ukraine to send a letter to the King of Nepal and for the expedition leader to meet with both the King and Prime Minister of Nepal. We only got the permit at the beginning of May.

Subsequently Mstyslav Gorbenko, Vadim Leontiev, Sergei Pugachov, and Mykhaylo Zagirnyak climbed the northern flanks of P2 above the Pungen Glacier to reach the east ridge at ca 5200m. The main difficulties on this section were deep snow, a big rimaye at 5000m, and an ice slope above. Once on the ridge we cached equipment in a snow cave dug into the south flank in preparation for the final push. The corniced east ridge itself was generally of moderate difficulty but presented two crux sections; a tricky gendarme at around 5800m and, higher, an 80-meter snow-covered rock wall. The climb was awarded an overall grade of 5A on the Russian scale. Three days were spent on the final ascent, with the summit reached at 4 p.m. on May 14.

MSTYSLAV GORBENKO, *Ukraine*

JUGAL HIMAL

Ganchenpo, north face, attempt. Bruno Burr, Oskar Wachter, and I left Kathmandu on May 6 and after a five-day trek through the Langtang Valley established base camp at 4400m in the Nyangtse Chui Valley. We hoped to climb the north face of Ganchenpo (6367m). The monsoon set in early this year, so we changed our strategy and tried to climb the route at night. On May 15 we went up to 5500m, where we placed Camp 1. After seven hours we reached the end of the moraine and were able to have our first view of the hidden glacier below the north face of Ganchenpo. It looked completely different than shown on the map, was full of deep crevasses, and much steeper than we expected. In the time we had available there was no way we would have been able to cross this glacier basin, and as we only carried equipment for one high camp, we retreated. We left base camp on May 20 and started our journey back to Kathmandu. Future parties with designs on the north face should expect to make at least two high camps and allow enough time to cross the glacier basin. (*Editor's note: in the past the north face has received at least three ascents via different lines from unauthorized parties.*)

JÜRGEN SCHÜTZ, *Germany*

KHUMBU HIMAL

Hungchi, attempt. Recently brought on to the permitted list, this 7036m mountain on the Nepal-Tibet watershed south of the Nup La had never received an official attempt before last autumn. Takatsugu Shiro's six-member Japanese party from Osaka attempted the southwest ridge but gave up on October 11 at 6700m.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Kwangde Nup, north buttress direct ascent, Cheap Wine. During the post monsoon Czech climbers, Jan Doudlebsky and Radek Lienarth, completed a new direct finish to the 1989 American route on the North Buttress of Kwangde Nup (6035m). The pair began their climb on October 26 at ca 4800m, reaching the crest of the buttress from the right at 5150m. They completed the route on the 30th, having climbed 37 pitches to the summit. Most of the lower section was III to V+ but in the central section there was one pitch of VI-, two of VI, and one of VII. After climbing the 60-degree snow/ice slope to below the steep headwall of the pillar, where they placed their fourth bivouac, they climbed three big pitches graded VIII/A2, VII+, and VIII-. Two pitches of ice (80 degrees, then 75 degrees) led to more rock, which was climbed in two more pitches of VII- to reach the summit slopes (50 degrees). The ca 1100m route was christened Cheap Wine.

JIRI NOVAK, *Czech Republic*

Kwangde Lho, north face, second ascent of Breashears-Lowe route. After retreating from the right-hand variation on the northwest ridge of Ama Dablam (reported elsewhere), Alasdair Coull and I made the second ascent of the 1982 Breashears-Lowe Route on the north or Hungo Face of Kwangde's highest summit, Kwangde Lho (6187m). The line had been attempted three weeks previously by British climbers, Dave Hollinger and Andy Sharpe, but they had been forced to retreat after 300 meters due to dangerous amounts of powder snow. We found it in much better condition, with all the loose snow having fallen off to leave good névé. As far as we could tell, conditions in the lower runnel were similar to those found on the first ascent; mainly good névé/ice with the seventh and eighth pitches being particularly thin. The average angle was 70-80 degrees.

After bivouacking at the bottom of the face, we managed to climb the whole ca 600-meter runnel on the first day. On the second day we continued to follow the original line, finding mainly straightforward steep snow. However, a couple of pitches were quite exciting due to the sparse protection and unconsolidated nature of the snow. On reaching the middle rock band, we discovered the smear of ice, which provided the crux on the 1982 ascent, to be not properly formed. Instead, we traversed 100 meters to the right and bivouacked below a much fatter parallel band of névé. The following day we climbed through the 80-meter rock barrier at about Scottish IV, exiting on to the upper snowfield. The first half of the snowfield turned out to be perfect névé but the upper half was composed of very steep, unconsolidated runnels.

We managed to find another bivouac site at the top of the snowfield (enough snow for reasonable bivouac ledges was found at all three sites) and in the morning climbed five more pitches of very deep powder to the ridge. We continued up the ridge for two more pitches before contouring to the southwest ridge just below the summit. The route was 1400m high with a crux section of Scottish VI, 5.

As for our descent, the upper rock was rappelled from in situ anchors for 180 meters to reach a snow ridge, which led easily down to a hanging glacier. We had another bivouac here, then spent the next two days descending the original route down to the Lumding Valley and over to the main Dudh Kosi at Ghat. The descent involved very complex route finding. A careful study of Bill O'Connor's *Trekking Peaks of Nepal* is highly recommended.

SAM CHINNERY, *United Kingdom*

Kwangde Shar, north face, second ascent to the summit, Extra Blue Sky. During the autumn British climbers Jon Bracey and Owen Samuel made the second ascent of Extra Blue Sky to the summit of ca 6100m Kwangde Shar (fourth ascent to its junction with the north east ridge). This route on the north or Hungo Face of Kwangde Shar was climbed in November 1996 by the French, Samuel Beugey, Christophe Profit, André Rhem, and Jérôme Ruby. Bracey, and Samuel more or less followed the original line to where it begins to slant up left, then followed the route taken in 2000 by British climbers Jules Cartwright and Sam Chinnery through the rock bands and up steep snow to the crest of the northeast ridge. They made three bivouacs on the face and found the climbing to be generally Scottish IV/V ice/mixed except for the crux pitch, a steep thin smear over compact rock (the same as that climbed by Cartwright and Chinnery), which they rated at Scottish VII, 6. On their fourth day they climbed the sustained upper section of the 1978 northeast ridge, surprised to find difficulties up to Scottish VI. After reaching the sharp summit, a further two days were spent making the lengthy descent to the Lumding Valley and back over to the Dudh Kosi.

MOUNTAIN INFO, *High Mountain Sports*

Ama Dablam, northwest ridge, first ascent. A British expedition arrived below the mountain in October and based themselves in the flesh-pots of Pangboche with the aim of attempting the unclimbed northwest ridge of 6812m Ama Dablam. First off the mark were Sam Chinnery and Alasdair Coull, who set their sights of the right hand (southwest) spur descending from Tsuru Ri (a subsidiary summit on the northwest ridge). They approached this in one day (October 27) from Pangboche via the normal Ama Dablam base camp and then northward up a scree gully to an obvious notch at ca 4900m at the start of the main spur. After three days climbing up much disturbingly loose rock, following a line of abandoned fixed rope (thought to be from a previous Russian attempt), they came to a cache of equipment (snow stakes, etc). They climbed two more pitches before deciding to abandon their attempt at ca 5900m due to the poor quality and dangerous nature of the climbing. They rappelled their line of ascent and went back to Pangboche, subsequently turning their attentions to Kwangde (reported elsewhere).

Also setting off on the 27th were Rich Cross and I. We wanted to try to climb directly up the front face of the gable end of Tsuru Ri and continue up the northwest ridge. We camped on the moraine of the Tsuru Glacier at ca 4900m and the next day set off early to climb the initial 300-meter snow/névé slope (ca 50 degrees) that leads to the central weakness in the wall above. The stonefall on this slope was bad but by midday we were belaying at the start of the major climbing. Finding the wall to be steeper, looser, and offering little in the way of ledges, we decided to retreat. There is a fantastic line up this face, but it would almost certainly require big wall tactics (portaledge, haul bag, etc.).

After a short rest period at Pangboche, we decided to attempt the northwest spur of the gable end. Although this is longer, it looked to offer the least technical route to Tsuru Ri and we knew it had been tried many times in the past. We set off at 9:00 a.m. on November 1 with very large rucksacks. We first contoured to the shepherds huts at Ralha and then ascended to the Tsuru Glacier. Crossing the dry glacier, we scrambled up to the lower part of the ridge and then along this for several hours, passing a large gendarme on the left, to arrive at a gravel col (ca 4550m), where we made our first camp. Over the next four days we climbed the ridge to a campsite just below Tsuru Ri (ca 6100m). On this section all the gendarmes were either climbed

direct or turned on the north flank, except at two points. The second of these, which occurred at ca 5800m on the last day, involved turning a vertical tower by 20 meters of down-climbing on a snow ramp to reach the upper gable end, then two long mixed pitches of Scottish 6 to regain the crest. Throughout the whole of this section we came across remarkably little in situ gear; just 15 meters of old rope and only two fixed anchors.

The next two days were spent traversing the horizontal section of the ridge. Initially this was snow and ice, but later there were a large number of gendarmes that gave rock and mixed climbing. It was necessary to make one rappel from a particularly large gendarme, which could not be turned. No fixed gear was found here. This section took us to the start of the upper face, which is defended by a very conspicuous serac barrier.

On the eighth day we made a three-pitch traverse rightward below the serac and then climbed back up to its flat plateau top via an ice pitch in a hidden couloir. The next day we climbed good *névé* runnels, at first trending left, then back right, to join the north ridge about 100 meters below the summit. Throughout this ascent we more or less followed the line of the 1980 Japanese route, which is still festooned with ca 600+ meters of rope and over 30 rock anchors. We camped on the ridge at ca 6700m and the next day, November 10, reached the summit at 9 a.m. In total, our route had involved around 4,000 meters of climbing in generally very settled but cold weather.

JULES CARTWRIGHT, *United Kingdom*

Pumori, west face, new route. A five-man expedition comprising four Swiss and one American split into two groups with three of the team attempting the south ridge and the other two, Swiss guides, Ueli Bühler and Ueli Steck, opting for the west face. After a suitable period of acclimatisation Bühler and Steck crossed the rimaye at the bottom of the 1,400-meter face at 2 a.m. on May 6. They adopted a very lightweight approach, taking one 60-meter rope and virtually no bivouac gear, thereby hoping to make a fast ascent. The pair reported that most of the face was 55-60 degrees with some parts as steep as 80 degrees, while there was a section of mixed climbing at M4. They reached the south ridge at ca 6700m and continued to a bivouac at 6800m. Without gear Bühler and Steck were soon driven out of their bivouac by cold. Climbing again at 2 a.m. on the 7th, they moved quickly up the remaining 350 meters until near disaster struck. While moving together up a 45-degree couloir, Steck set off a windslab avalanche that swept the two climbers back down the face. Fortunately, Bühler was able to stop them both and after getting over the shock they continued upward, reaching the summit at 6 a.m., just in time to see the sunrise. They then descended the east ridge. There were no fixed ropes in place as no one that season had climbed above the east col. Below the col, things became easier as they were able to follow marker wands and use ropes placed by a German expedition. They were finally back in their west face base camp (5200m) at 8:30 p.m., having spent 43 hours on the mountain.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Pumori, ascent, attempt, and tragedy. There were two events during the autumn on 7161m Pumori that were noteworthy for entirely different reasons. The good news was the successful ascent by the first Iranian women mountaineers to come on any expedition to the Nepalese Himalaya. The team was led by Zerefeh Rahimzaddeh and comprised 11 members, eight of

whom were women. The three men were: an experienced Himalayan climber, Jalal Chesmeh Ghsabani, whom they wanted for his expertise; the team's doctor, whom they needed as they knew of no woman doctor who climbed; and a civil servant who never moved above base camp and got extremely bored, but whom they had to take as their chaperon.

Three of the women successfully reached the summit on October 20 via the Normal Route up the southeast face to the east ridge. The summiteers were Leila Bahrami, Mitra Nazari, and Farhondeh, together with Chesmah Ghsabani and three Sherpas. The Sherpas stopped trying to open the route at two quasi-vertical sections above the col on the east ridge because they thought the women would not be able to manage such difficulty. However, the women insisted, ropes were fixed, and the party of seven went to the top in a 10-hour summit day.

The Iranians had no accidents, but a team of 10 Basque mountaineers was not so lucky. These climbers were also on the Normal Route, but never summited. On October 19 five young alpinists, Iñaki Aiertza (27), Javier Arkauz (22), Benat Arrue (22), Aritz Artieda (23), and César Nieto (23), perished when seracs above them collapsed and the resulting avalanche carried them 600-800 meters down the face. This side of the mountain has a long history of avalanches that have resulted in fatal consequences and for this reason the Iranians never occupied a camp at the top of the southeast face, as the Basques and many other climbers before them had done. The avalanche hit the Basques when they were just 50 meters above their camp, which they had pitched at ca 6200m.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Kangtega, east pillar, first ascent, winter ascent. The most interesting climb of the winter 2001-02 season was a new line followed by a trio of Frenchmen on Kangtega, 6779m, a peak in the Everest region southwest of Ama Dablam. Christophe Profit, Olivier Besson, and Andre Rhem made a rapid alpine-style climb of the east pillar to 6400m from a base camp at 5000m on the Hinku Nup Glacier.

Their pillar had never been attempted before, and for the first two days they encountered no very great difficulties. But above their second bivouac at 6,300m, after they had moved another 100 meters to the shoulder, serious problems arose. The pillar ended at the shoulder, and now seracs threatened from above. Straight up from the shoulder were not only dangerous seracs, but also a difficult rock step with mixed rock and ice in some places. They decided to make an easy traverse to the normal route on the southeast face, went to the top from there, and descended the face.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Editor's note: Their original intention had been a direct line up the north face to the left of the one climbed by Valeri Babanov. However, conditions were too snowy, so they moved to the unclimbed pillar that marks the left side of the face climbed by another French team in 1998 (AAJ 1999). The three first acclimatized on the Normal Route up the Southeast Face, where they left a camp at 6000m to aid their descent. On the first two days they climbed some delicate mixed ground and steep rock steps with difficulties up to 5+/6a. On the third day they were unable to climb through the big serac barrier below the summit slopes, as the ice was so hard their picks would not penetrate. Instead they made a dangerous traverse left beneath it to gain the southeast ridge. They descended to their pre-placed camp for the night and on the following day climbed up for seven hours to the summit (December 5). It took them just six hours to descend the Normal Route to their base camp.

Everest, pre-monsoon statistics. The largest number of people in any single season reached the summit of Everest during the spring. An astonishing total of 183 went to the top, 101 from the south and 82 from the north. The total far surpassed the previous record of 117 climbers in the spring of 1999. On just one day, May 23, 2001, 47 successfully reached the top via the normal Nepalese route via the South Col, seven more than the previous record set in 1993 of 40 on May 10. It is thought that 50 of the climbers reaching the top during the spring had already summited in previous years, raising the grand total of individual summiteers to 1,114. Counting Sherpas and base camp staff it is estimated that the total number of people operating on the mountain throughout the season was in excess of 1,000, and whereas in 2000 only two ascents were made without oxygen, in spring 2001 the number was nine. To get a more complete picture of the population of the tent villages that sprang up, one must add uncounted dozens of trekkers, who went to base camps and even advanced base camps.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, oldest and youngest summiteers. The oldest person ever to reach the summit was a 64-year-old American physician, Sherman ("Sherm") Bull. He was joined at the top by his son, Bradford ("Brad") Bull (33). The pair were only the second father and son team to summit at the same time. Sherman Bull, whose age surpasses by one year the previous oldest summiteer, Toshio Yamamoto, a Japanese climber aged 63 in May 2000, said this had been the fifth time he had gone to Everest. When he finally made it all the way to the top, his success as the oldest summiteer didn't really sink in immediately. However, getting to the top was "a dream come true."

The youngest Everest summiteer was a 16-year-old Nepalese school boy, Temba Tshiri Sherpa, who had unsuccessfully tried to scale it from the Nepalese side in the spring of 2000 and received severely frostbitten fingers, some of which had to be amputated. Now he was back again, this time on the Tibetan side, as his own one-man team but with some help from others on the mountain. Temba later reported he was a bit frightened by the three dead bodies he encountered in one area along the route. He also had difficulty doing things like putting on his harness due to his damaged fingers. However, he had "a great feeling" when he got to the top. Now he plans to concentrate on his studies—he is in ninth grade—rather than to climb again soon, but he could change his mind if someone were to give him "a good chance."

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, the death of Babu Chiri. Babu Chiri, the incredibly strong and fast mountaineer who was also the most famous Sherpa of recent times, died on April 29 at the age of 35. His most spectacular feats on Everest include staying overnight on the summit without any bottled oxygen for 21 hours in May 1999, and then, after returning to base camp, making another complete ascent later in the same month. The following year he achieved the fastest ever ascent made from base camp to summit on the Nepalese side, when he climbed to the top in just 16 hours and 56 minutes. In May 1995 he became the first person ever to make two ascents of the mountain in the same month. He made 10 ascents of Everest, and if he had been successful in the spring, his total of 11 would have been equalled by only one person, Appa Sherpa.

Babu Chiri was a fine person, a “gentleman” as one frequent American Everest summi-
teer used to call him. He wanted to build a school for the children of his home village, Taksindu,
which has none. His next climbing project was to attempt an incredible traverse of Everest from
the Tibetan base camp to the Khumbu base camp, then immediately turn around and reverse
the traverse. This was a plan only Babu Chiri would contemplate.

However, this dream died with him when he fell into a crevasse near Camp 2 in the
Western Cwm. At around 4 p.m. on April 29 he told others he was going to take some photo-
graphs in the vicinity of the camp. When he hadn’t returned by 9 p.m., his brother Dawa went
out to search for him. Another expedition leader, Willi Benegas, and his head Sherpa, Pemba
Gyalzen, joined the search and around midnight found Babu’s footprints leading to a crevasse.
Due to fresh snow, the crevasse was not readily visible and was only apparent because of the
obvious hole caused by someone falling in. While two Sherpas belayed him, Benegas descend-
ed around 10 meters into the crevasse, found the body and ascertained Babu was dead. At 6
the following morning the effort to recover the body began and it was brought to the surface three
hours later. His death was reported in the media around the world and tributes poured in. King
Birendra of Nepal sent a message of condolence to the family. In this statement he declared that
Babu’s “demise has caused irreparable loss to the nation and to the mountaineering fraternity.”
The prime minister and other dignitaries paid their respects at the Sherpa Centre in
Kathmandu, where Babu’s body, covered with flowers and Buddhist ceremonial scarves, had
been brought.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, first ascent by a blind person. The most remarkable of all the summiters in the spring
was the 32-year-old totally sightless American climber, Erik Weihenmayer. On his return to
Kathmandu he said “I spent two and a half months getting there from my arrival at base camp.
You work so hard and so long to get there but I just took it day by day. And when I took the last
step to the top, it was almost an anticlimax.” Weihenmayer was among the 26 successful men
and women who reached the summit on May 25, the last day of the season on which anyone
reached the top.

A major problem during his climb was the notorious network of crevasses in the
Khumbu Icefall. He said it took him a long time to get accustomed to jumping them. He man-
aged to cope because he received guidance from a team-mate who placed Weihenmayer’s foot
at one edge. Then, in order to judge the distance he had to jump, Weihenmayer probed the
other lip with ski poles. Once, he came to a crevasse unexpectedly and in his surprise put a leg
down it. His torso landed safely on the far side and he sustained no injury.

A retinal disease made Weihenmayer sightless when he was 13. Before attempting Everest
he had considerable climbing experience, which included Aconcagua, McKinley, and El Capitan.
Before going into the Everest region, he said in Kathmandu that he was “confident about how
I perform in the mountains. The reason I do it is probably the same as that of anyone else. I
probably have to put in more effort but for me it is still the same adventure and excitement. I
get a lot of pleasure out of the wind and sun on my face and the feeling of rock under my feet;
the same kind of pleasure that others get out of the view.”

However, there were other climbers on Everest who expected a disaster. One of them
callously remarked that he planned to stay near Weihenmayer so that he would be “the first to

take a picture of the dead blind guy.” However, there was no picture to be taken. Guided by a bell on the rucksack of a team-mate ahead of him and by his own feeling and probing, Weihenmayer, with three team-mates and at least one Sherpa, arrived at the top of the World at 10:05 a.m. on May 25 and descended safely over the next few days.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, post monsoon attempts. In stark contrast to the unprecedented hordes of climbers on Everest during the spring, the post monsoon season saw practically no one on the mountain. For the first time since autumn 1970 not a single team came to the Nepalese side of the peak and in Tibet there were only three (see elsewhere).

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

For more on Everest from the north side, see the Tibet reports.

Lhotse Middle, first ascent. The most impressive all of accomplishments in the spring was the first ascent of Lhotse Middle (8413m), which although not exactly a mountain in its own right, stands only 50 meters lower than Makalu and was widely recognised to be the highest unclimbed summit in the world. Various expeditions in recent years had planned to reach it from the west via the main summit of Lhotse, or from the east via Lhotse Shar. Some had tried the south face of the Lhotse-Lhotse Shar ridge. Most of these teams had come from the former Soviet Union but all had failed to make a serious attempt from east or west above the two summits.

In the spring 12 Russian climbers led by Sergei Timofeev took an entirely different approach. First they ascended the Normal Route on Everest as far as the South Col, then they moved along Lhotse’s unclimbed north ridge and out on to the previously untouched north or Kangshung face, which is technically in Tibet. Finally, they climbed up to the middle summit’s west ridge.

The Nepalese Government had not officially brought Lhotse Shar on to the permitted list when the Russians established Base Camp at the standard Everest site on April 1. As with several previous expeditions attempting the Middle Summit, they were operating under a permit for Lhotse Main and with the help of another expedition comprising just two men, Simone Moro and Denis Urubko, who planned to attempt an Everest-Lhotse traverse (see elsewhere), began to equip the Normal Everest route up to the South Col. By the end of the month they had the route opened and much of the necessary equipment up at Camp 4 on the Col, but still no permit from the Nepalese Government. However, on May 16, two weeks before the proposed end of the expedition, the vice-secretary of the Ministry of Tourism visited Everest Base Camp to hand over personally to the Russians the long awaited permission.

Over the next days Alexey Bolotov, Petr Kuznetsov, Evgeny Vinogradsky, and Timofeev pushed the route across the upper Kangshung Face, fixing more than 1000 meters of rope. On the 22nd they eventually gained the foot of the rock wall below the ridge. The steepness of some of the climbing here was estimated to be at least 65 degrees. Finally, on the 23rd, the Russians climbed a difficult leftward-slanting snow ramp leading to the lower part of the ridge that descends east from Lhotse’s Main Summit. They climbed down this ridge to the lowest point and then up the final 70 meters or so of very steep and narrow crest towards the top of Lhotse Middle. The four arrived a little below the top at 3:00 p.m. but felt the snow conditions on the

summit cornice were a little too dangerous to climb to the highest point. The final rock step just below the top was a "very difficult 90-degree wall," well led by Bolotov and graded VI.

On the 24th Nikolai Jiline, Yuri Koshelenko, and Gleb Sokolov repeated the ascent, and the following day it was the turn of Vladimir Ianotchkin and Victor Volodin. All summiters used supplementary oxygen and all except Koshelenko had been to the top of an 8000m peak before. In this respect Vinogradski was the most experienced high altitude climber. He has summited Everest four times, Cho Oyu twice, Lhotse, Lhotse Shar, and was part of the Kangchenjunga traverse expedition. The full story of this rescue appears earlier in this journal.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY AND YURI KOSHELENKO, *Russia*

Lhotse, rescue. A rather dramatic rescue of a British climber took place on Lhotse's normal west face route. The Briton was 19-year-old Thomas Moores, who was part of an American-led commercially organized expedition. He had reached the summit on May 21 with a Polish climber, Dariusz Zaluski, who was on a different permit. On the descent, close to the base of the couloir, Zaluski saw Moores fall ca 150 meters from an altitude of 8300m

The principal rescuer was Simone Moro, an Italian with another Lhotse permit, who was in his tent at 7950m making preparations for his own summit bid during the next day or so (Moro with the Kazakhstan mountaineer, Denis Urubko, had a permit to link the summits of Everest and Lhotse via the unclimbed north ridge of Lhotse, a much talked about Himalayan objective). At 6 p.m. he heard Zaluski shout about Moores's fall. Later, back in Kathmandu, Moro reported that when he heard Zaluski, he immediately left his tent to rescue the fallen Briton. He said no one in any of the other tents at that camp on Lhotse's west face would join him because they said they would lose their chance at reaching the top. So Moro went up alone. He found Moores at 7 p.m., lying on his back in deep snow, which Moro feared could avalanche at any time. Moores's face was bleeding and he had lost a crampon but had been given more oxygen by Zaluski.

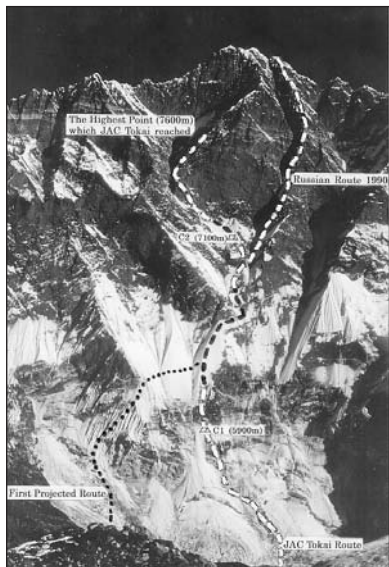
Moro, who has considerable experience on Nepal's great Himalayan peaks, is reported to have hoisted the teenager (who weighed no more than 50 kg) on to his back, though other reports suggest he attached him to his own ice axe, then kicked big steps in the snow to help Moores reach Camp 4, which was situated left of a rock formation on the west face of Lhotse known as The Turtle. Back at Moro's tent, the Italian provided water and first aid, then the following morning organized more oxygen and arranged for a couple of Sherpas from a different expedition to escort Moores down towards the Western Cwm. That day an exhausted Moro realised that he had sacrificed his own summit bid.

Moores was the only member of his expedition to make a summit attempt. The leader, the American, Gary Pfisterer, said later in Kathmandu that he had instructed Moores to spend only one night at the high camp (which had been left behind by a Korean group when they left the mountain) and then to descend. However, the young Briton stayed on for another day and summited without the use of supplementary oxygen. He was later evacuated by helicopter to Kathmandu, where he was found to have internal injuries and was sent on to hospital in Bangkok.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY



The huge south face of Lhotse, attempted in winter by a Japanese party. For route information, see the photograph on the following page. *Photo courtesy of Chunichi Shimbun Ltd.*



Lhotse's south face, showing Russian 1990 summit route, right; Japanese projected route in the lower left; their high point in upper left.

Lhotse, south face, winter attempt. The Japan Alpine Club Tokai Section accomplished a remarkable ascent to open a new route from the west ridge to the west face of K2 in 1997. What would be most appropriate for the next target? It didn't take much time for us to come up with an answer. There was no other choice than the first winter ascent of the formidable South Face of Lhotse which remained as one of the last problems to be tackled among the Himalayan Giants. To take advantage of good and stable weather, the assault needed to be a speedy climb in the shortest possible period. The party was organized with eight members.

In the fall of 2001 we conducted training for acclimatization to high altitude in the Himalaya. Seven members climbed the normal route of Cho Oyu. Six members stood atop on October 9 and 11 in succession. Hideji Nazuka, the strongest member, climbed Dhaulagiri I on October 11 but suffered from serious frostbite that forced him to abandon his participation in the Lhotse climb. Two other members

also got sick. Therefore the potential members were reduced to only five climbers

The expedition party departed from Kathmandu on November 9 and established base camp (5200m) at the foot of the overwhelming south face of Lhotse on the 14th. The following is an extract from my diary in which I recorded details of the climb up until the time when we were forced to retreat.

On November 19 we commenced to pave the climbing route of the lower part of the wall. On the 23rd we reached a point of 6400m where C1 would have been set up, but as the place was too exposed to the danger of falling rocks and ice, we decided to pitch C1 at 5900m. We had Sherpas who were engaged to carry gear and supplies to C1 till the 28th.

We expected to push our climbing route to a point of 6400m, first following a Himalayan fluted steep slope to the left and then climbing up an ice-snow wall to the right. Here, however, there was also a serious danger of falling rocks. We changed the route to that taken by the Yugoslavians in 1981.

Now winter arrived. On December 1 we set up C1. We negotiated a difficult rock band of about 150m above C1 that led to a snow ridge of distinctive shape. The narrow part between 6400m and 6600m was particularly exposed to the danger of falling rocks. During route preparation work three members suffered bruising. To avoid falling rocks we left C1 at 4 a.m. for route paving. Custom-made down jackets protected us well from the cold. Later on Sherpas carried gear and supplies from C1 to C2, starting from C1 at 1 a.m.

We followed the Yugoslavian route without deviation and set up C2 at 7100m on the 6th. The Himalayan fluted slope was cut and leveled for the camp. On the 8th, the designated "A" party of Ohtani, Hanatani, and two Sherpas extended the route to a point about 30 meters above the snow col of 7350m where the Yugoslavian party positioned their C4. On the 11th, the "B" party of Tanabe, Miyoshi, and two Sherpas overcame the critical part, which is analogous

to the “throat” of the south face, and reached a large snow slope. Three sets of wire-ladders that the Yugoslavian party had abandoned still remained on the rock wall en route. The ladders told us how hard they had struggled.

Fine weather had lasted since we had set up BC but on December 15 snow clouds veiled Lhotse’s south face for the first time and we had snow fall at BC. Therefore “A” party was ordered to descend from C2 down to BC. It was on the 18th that “B” party resumed route paving upward. As it was bitterly cold at C2, we had to wait for sunshine before moving out of the tent. (The coldest temperatures were below -30°C , estimated.) Such a situation made progress very slow and we could open the route only up to a point of 7600m on the 18th. Ultimately, as a result, 7600m became the highest point we reached; that is just below the Yellow Band crossing the south face. The large slope above the “throat” was incessantly under attack from falling rocks. Tanabe was bruised while descending.

Ferocious winter winds, which were what we had most feared, started to blow on December 19. “B” party set out for route paving against strong winds, but we were unable to proceed. While the winds were getting fiercer on the 20th, we ascended to the “throat,” but a terrific gale wouldn’t allow us to progress further. Now our members were so exhausted that we knew we no longer had the strength to attempt a further push for the final assault. Without hesitation we decided retreat. We returned to BC on the 22nd.

Our attempt was unsuccessful, but we learned many things on the winter climb. I was convinced that the winter is not a bad season to climb the south face of Lhotse and that a well-organized team of the strongest climbers would possibly scale it in winter in a swift attack of 18 days. We shall return and challenge again in December 2003.

Members: Leader: Osamu Tanabe (40); deputy leader: Masamiki Takine (50); members: Kazuo Tobita (55), Manabu Miyoshi (35), Mikio Suzuki (34), Hisao Ohtani (32), Yasuhiro Hanatani (25). (*Editor’s note: Osamu Tanabe participated in the first winter ascent of Everest southwest face in 1991-1993.*)

Sherpas in “A” party: Dawa Tshiri Sherpa, Tshiring Dorge Sherpa. Sherpas in “B” party: Mingma Tshiri Sherpa, Nima Gyalzen Sherpa

Brief climbing chronicle of Lhotse’s south face:

- 1973 spring: Japanese party from Kanagawa reached 7300m.
- 1975 spring: Italian party led by Ricardo Cassin reached 7500m.
- 1981 spring: Yugoslavian party reached 8150m.
- 1984 spring: Czechoslovakian party, first ascent of south face of Lhotse Shar (8398m).
- 1985 autumn: Polish first reached 8200m.
- 1987 autumn: Polish second reached 8300m.
- 1989 spring: International party led by Reinhold Messner reached 7200m.
- 1989 autumn: Polish third reached 8300m; Jerzy Kukuczka died.
- 1989 winter: Christof Profit (France) reached 7300m.
- 1990 spring: Tomo Cesen (Slovenia) possibly made the first ascent, solo (controversial).
- 1990 autumn: Soviet Union made the second ascent, by a new route.
- 2001 winter: Japan JAC Tokai reached 7600m.

OSAMU TANABE, *Japan Alpine Club, Tokai Section*