

Mountaineering Maps of the World, Volume 1, Himalaya, 1977, 329 pages. Price: 19,000 yen; *Volume 2, Karakoram-Hindu Kush*, 1978, 350 pages. Price 21,000 yen. Editor, Koji Echigo. Tokyo: Gakushu Kenkyu-sha. Publisher, Hiroshi Watanabe. Illustrated.

These two large books (10 × 15½ inches) present the student of Himalayan, Karakoram and Hindu Kush mountaineering the only easily procured (though expensive) set of maps of nearly all these ranges. The names on the maps are printed in English. Altitudes are in meters. The maps seem to the reviewer to be accurate, being based on maps of the Survey of India and on expedition reports. The Japanese text on individual mountains is of course less useful to one not familiar with that language. There is, however, in addition to the maps, a treasure trove of well reproduced photographs, mostly in color and generally with English captions. These are two books to which I frequently refer.

H.A.C.

Himalaya und Karakorum by Toni Hiebeler. Zürich: Silva-Verlag, 1980. 248 pages, 134 color photographs. Price: 56 Swiss Francs.

As former editor of *Alpinismus* and author of more than twenty mountain books, Toni Hiebeler is a well-known authority on the mountains of the world. In *Himalaya und Karakorum* he presents us with an overview of the whole range, the geology, fauna and flora, peoples, personal experiences and especially the history of climbing. As in any such work which attempts to cover the whole of such a subject, there are certain errors which the reviewer spotted, particularly in the section with which he was most familiar, Nanda Devi. Yet the work seems generally accurate. It covers not only the regions most commonly visited by climbers but is particularly useful in describing the lesser-known parts; in fact, it would be hard to know where to turn elsewhere to find in one volume information for the less-explored areas. The maps which break all the range into eight main regions and 45 groups are very handy. The photographs, mostly by the author, are outstanding and beautifully reproduced. The work is also published in a French-language edition.

H. ADAMS CARTER

Ascent, edited by Allen Steck & Steve Roper. Sierra Club Books, San Francisco 1980. 272 pages, 8½ x 11, paperbound, illustrated. Price \$14.95.

Readers accustomed to *Ascent* each year in the Sixties and every other year in the early Seventies, and not at all since 1976, will be particularly pleased with this volume. Those who have not followed *Ascent's* growth

from magazine to book form will enjoy this volume's range of style and subject matter that certainly stands up as a well-balanced anthology. But a remarkable transition from the earlier *Ascent* has been effected, much to the editors' credit. In the Sixties, Steck and Roper, with Tejada-Flores and others, offered a balance of history, photography, creative writing and comprehensive information on selected climbing areas in a way that gave *Ascent* continuity from issue to issue. The same formula that produced an excellent annual periodical has now been applied to produce a very good book with a timeless selection of, by and large, good writing. I do not mean that some of the pieces in this volume won't become dated, or that some of the pieces in earlier volumes aren't as fresh today as when they were first published, but the overall effect here is of a strong permanent collection, not an ephemeral one.

The size, gloss and high-quality reproduction of striking photographs, might suggest this is a paperback coffee-table book. But *Ascent* is meant to be and should be read, though perhaps not all at once. The book is reminiscent of an English week-end book; being a collection of short pieces of varying length, for varying moods, requiring varying degrees of attentiveness.

David Roberts' novella is the centerpiece of the book, and the most ambitious selection. This first work of fiction by a proven master of mountaineering non-fiction and criticism is very well written. Craftsmanship to a very high standard is evident in every paragraph. Skill as a stylist is undeniably there. Although the writing of some of the other contributors is unusually good, Roberts' writing is alone in its class.

In his "Man Meets Myth" story, Ron Matous has succeeded where many before him have failed. He demonstrates that the umpteenth ascent of the Eiger is, in many essential ways, very like the first ascent. Along the way, Matous gives us a delightful and familiar picture of a climber fencing with doubt, resolve, fate and the weather as he waits for his deadline to do the climb or leave town.

"The Great Match" and "The Ascent of the Riffelberg" are both classics. They belong here, though they will be known to some readers already. Those who have not read them yet may do so here in good company with the original illustrations.

Mike Graber's history of climbing at Cathedral Spires, together with the photographs, is the most practical of the selections. I can't imagine a trip to the Spires without reference to this piece, and many will go there on the strength of it.

Ed Webster's photos of the Southwest and Graber and Kearney's Alaska are beautiful, clear and alive. Many calendars and posters on the market today feature photographs not nearly as good, nor as well reproduced. Roberts' criticism of expedition books is fine, though not as rigorous as some of his earlier pieces, such as his examination of the John Menlove Edwards' writing in an earlier *Ascent*.

Homage is paid to *Ascent's* California roots in the style and subject matter of "Anti-Climbing at Pinnacles", "In the Constellations of Roosters and Lunatics" and in "The Ribbon Option", the latter's Colorado date-line notwithstanding. These are all creditable pieces. On the other hand, "The Way of the White Serpent" is ambitious and serious, but I thought it was lost here.

Still, of faults there are really very few in this happy publishing event that will give so many climbers a link with the past.

ANDREW C. HARVARD

Rocky Heights—A Guide to Boulder Free Climbs 1980, by James S. Erickson. Published by the author. 280 pages, illus. Price \$10.00.

This is the finest climbing guidebook yet published. It is comprehensive, accurate, concise, compact, sturdily bound of durable materials and, wonder of wonders, reasonably priced.

The writing is varied and interesting; at times witty or playfully taunting; often challenging and always suffused with Erickson's love for and sensitivity to both the climbs and to Boulder's growing community of climbers, of which he is the pre-eminent member. Even the crisply logical grading system reflects the fact that this book was for Erickson a labor of love. Only extreme love could have inspired him to the arduous task of finding a consensus on the relative difficulties of every pitch in the area by type of climbing, which feature forms the basis for the unparalleled accuracy of the free climbing grades. A fanatic devotion has brought forth his highly creative *quality* and *danger* ratings, which convey far more information in a less cumbersome form than any other guidebook.

Virtually every feature of *Rocky Heights*, from the handy index, to the unpretentious format, to the trim size, bears the unique stamp of Erickson's rigorously logical, boldly imaginative and dogged search for perfection, which has for so long characterized his climbing. I would beg the reader's indulgence, however, for not documenting the above sweeping assertions in order to turn now to what I consider to be his most significant achievement: the laying of an ethical foundation. Meanwhile, I invite the curious or skeptical to pick up a copy and see for themselves if Erickson's skills as a writer don't at least equal his skills as a climber.

America's climbing history is discontinuous and diverse, reflecting the phenomenal variety of climbing challenges that abound on our continent. With such dissimilar problems to excite the imagination and tax the spirit as El Cap, Mount Rainier, Devil's Lake and boulders here, there and everywhere, it is hardly surprising that the rules of the game are anything but uniform. When Erickson says, therefore, on page 7 of *Rocky Heights*, that "rock climbing is a game, only a game, and nothing but a game, (and)