

help. We set out again on December 10 but had bad weather on the 11th. We left Base Camp on December 13 on a last try. The wind high up was too violent. The mountain was becoming dangerous. We gave up. It seems to us that the north face of Annapurna is extremely dangerous.

BERNARD MULLER, *Groupe de Haute Montagne*

*Annapurna, Two Winter Attempts.* Japanese led by Kuniaki Yagihara on the south face of Annapurna got to 7200 meters before too much heavy snowfall sent them back. On the north face Koreans led by An Chang-Yeul attempted the Dutch route. They claim to have reached the summit on December 7, but there are serious doubts about this. The leader of the French expedition, Bernard Muller, told me that they saw the Koreans' summit team of one Korean woman and four Sherpas too far from the summit to have reached it at the time claimed. The Sherpas with the French were told by the Koreans' Sherpas that no one got to the top.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Varah Shikhar (Fang), West Ridge Attempt.* On September 13 Scott Fischer, Joe Hladick and I were in Pokhara, ready for our nine-day trek to Base Camp. The monsoon broke the day before we arrived there, giving us for the first time a full view of our proposed route on the west ridge of Varah Shikhar. We were pleased with the overall technical difficulty of the ridge but concerned with its length. As an alpine-style team of three climbers—soon altitude problems reduced us to two—we planned to carry everything necessary for the duration of the climb from Base Camp. Three miles of climbing to the summit after gaining the ridge itself had us quite worried. We left Base Camp at 11,500 feet on September 26. Beside all the normal necessities, we had 1200 feet of rope and 14 days of food and fuel. We moved to Camps I, II and III at 16,000, 17,500 and 20,000 feet on September 26, 28 and 30 respectively. It was from Camp III that Hladick had to turn back. Fischer and I made Camp IV at 21,000 feet on October 3 and Camp V at 22,500 feet on October 6. Here bad weather pinned us in our tent. Four days later, with supplies running short, our choices were cut to two: to push through the storm to a higher camp where a summit bid could be made if and when the storm broke or to sit and retreat when it broke. We chose the former. On this last push we reached a high point of 24,000 feet but with weather conditions worsening and high winds persisting, we were unable to establish a camp. We were forced to retreat to our Camp V site. It wasn't until October 15, supplies exhausted, that we finally started the descent, bad weather still hanging on. We reached Base Camp on the 16th, having spent 21 days on the route.

WESLEY KRAUSE, *Mountain Madness*