

## Bhutan

*Ganglagachu.* A ten-member French expedition led by Philippe Allibert and Jean-François Tripard on October 25 climbed Ganglagachu (c. 6000 meters) in northern Bhutan, an “elegant,” although not very difficult snow-and-rock peak. A photograph appears in *Montagnes Magazine* of January 1993 on page 12.

## India—Sikkim

*Chombu Attempt.* A six-man Japanese team from Toyo University, led by Kenshiro Ohtani, was the first foreign expedition allowed to enter this part of Sikkim since World War II. They unsuccessfully attempted Chombu (6362 meters, 20,872 feet) via the Sebu La and the Chombu Glacier, west of the peak. They reached a high point of 5900 meters on October 29. A narrow ridge and loose snow stopped them.

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## Nepal

*Kangchenjunga Ascent and Tragedy.* The famous Polish woman climber, Wanda Rutkiewicz, was last seen shortly after eight P.M. on May 12. On May 10, she and Mexican Carlos Carsolio, leader of a team of four Mexicans and two Poles, were climbing between destroyed Camp III at 7300 meters on the north face and Camp IV at 7900 meters when Wanda at eleven P.M. decided to bivouac. Carsolio continued on and got to the ice cave which was Camp IV at 6:30 A.M. Rutkiewicz arrived only at seven P.M. The pair left Camp IV at 3:30 A.M. on the 12th in good weather. According to Carsolio, she was climbing even more slowly than usual, and he went far ahead of her despite his having to break trail in deep snow while she could follow in his footsteps. “She was climbing extremely slowly,” Carsolio reported later. “Maybe it was because she was 49 years old, or maybe because of her leg,” which she had broken on Elbruz in 1981 and had kept bothering her. She had told him before going to Kangchenjunga, “I will not be quick. I don’t want to take risks. I have a lot of respect for Kangchenjunga,” which she had attempted with the Slovenes from the southwest in 1991. Carsolio reached the top alone at five P.M., the first Latin American to gain Kangchenjunga’s summit. During the descent to Camp IV, he met Rutkiewicz three hours later between 8250 and 8300 meters. She was inside a wind hole, a kind of cave carved out of the snow by the wind, where she had stopped to bivouac an hour and a half earlier. “It was good protection for her,” said Carsolio. “It was a very cold night, but clear and not windy.” She told him she was cold, that her old down suit was not warm enough. She had her bivouac sack around her. She had no sleeping bag, stove, fuel or food, and she had taken from Camp IV that morning only a liter of water. She did have a headlamp, 20 meters of rope, extra gloves, extra goggles and perhaps some sweets. She

planned to go for the summit the next morning. "She showed in her eyes determination to reach the summit," he said. "I think she felt this was her last chance to climb Kangchenjunga. I told her I was going to Camp IV for the night and would descend to Camp II and wait for her there." There was no food or fuel left at Camp IV. They were together for perhaps ten minutes; she was clear mentally. Then Carsolio went on down, never to see or hear from her again. A member at a lower camp watched the mountain on the 13th, the day when she should have gone to the summit, and saw no movement that day. But she could have left her bivouac during the dark early morning hours and would have been out of sight when she reached 8400 meters. Carsolio left Camp IV at noon on the 13th and spent that night and two more at Camp II at 6890 meters, waiting for Rutkiewicz. When she had failed to appear by the morning of the 16th, he left for Base Camp, leaving at Camp II a tent, sleeping bag, walkie-talkie radio (one of only two they had—the other was at Base Camp), food, gas and a thermos of water. At Base Camp, he and Arkadiusz Gąsienica and Andrés Delgado, who had been unwell and unable to go for the summit, had the other walkie-talkie open all the time, but no sound came from it. The three remaining members finally left Base Camp in very bad weather on May 21 with no idea of what had happened to Rutkiewicz. "It was difficult for us to leave the mountain," Carsolio said in Kathmandu, "but I am sure that she cannot have survived because of the bad weather and because she was extremely tired and without drink." This year on Kangchenjunga she had no problems with altitude sickness, nor had she succumbed to frostbite in April when two Mexican teammates, Carsolio's wife Elsa Avila and his brother Alfredo, did get seriously frostbitten and had to go home for medical treatment. Wanda Rutkiewicz had eight 8000ers already to her credit. She was the only woman to have climbed more than four of them. The first was Everest in 1978, when she became the first European woman and the third woman of any nation to ascend it. In 1991 she had conceived the ambitious plan to bag the rest of the 14 giant mountains in a year or a year-and-a-half. She wanted to attempt a second 8000er this spring; her name was on the list of the Romanian Dhaulagiri team. This summer she was to have been a member of an expedition to Broad Peak. Wanda Rutkiewicz will go down in history as one of the greats of mountaineering.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Kangchenjunga Attempt and Tragedy.* Our expedition consisted of Hannes Grimm, Walter Hadersdorfer, Edu Koch, Dr. Gerhard Reif, Michael Saumweber, Karl Schrag and me as leader. On March 4, we left Basantpur with 156 porters. After traveling through Dhoban, Sokathum and Ghunsa, we got to Base Camp at 5100 meters at Pang Pema on March 19. From Gunsa on, because of the altitude, we had to make many carries with nine porters and 13 yaks. Colds brought from Europe weakened the team. We set up Advance Base at 5400 meters at the foot of the west-southwest ridge on March 20 and Camp I at 5750