

*Makalu, Attempt by West Face and Ascent by Normal Route.* Our expedition was composed of Italians Floriano Castelnovo, Fabio Iacchini, Fabrizio Manoni, Salvatore Panzeri, Dario Spreafico and me as leader, Czech Leopold Sulovsky, Slovene Miroslav Svetičič, German Wolfgang Thomaseth and Tamang porters Mingmar, Saila, Tirtha and Tek. From April 5 to May 17, we attempted the west face of Makalu, where we reached the top of the last snowfield at 7600 meters (not 7800 meters as claimed by others who had climbed to that point before us.) Our strongest team, Panzeri, Spreafico and Sulovsky, was not able to climb the first part of the rock above, which was very difficult and unsafe. On May 20, nine left Base Camp to try the normal route alpine-style. Bivouacs were made on May 20 and 21 at 6500 and 7500 meters. On May 22 at 2:30 P.M., Sulovsky, Panzeri, Spreafico, Manomi, Tirtha and Mingmar were on the summit. On the last part, from 8100 meters to the summit, they did not follow the normal route but took a new variant on the northeast ridge.

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*Makalu West Face Attempts.* The west face of Makalu was also attempted by American Jeff Lowe and French climbers Catherine Destivelle and Erik Decamp. After acclimatization, they divided. Lowe turned to the route unsuccessfully tried in 1981 by Pole Wojciech Kurtyka and Briton Alex MacIntyre. He was dismayed to find that the Italians also had permission to attempt the same route and were a week ahead of him in going to the mountain. When he arrived at the foot of the face, he was, as he described it, “in a bit of a dilemma” about his own climb. He didn’t want to join the Italians on their fixed ropes, but he “felt ridiculous” making his own line very near it. “I was quite de-motivated” by this situation, but he ascended the lower part of their route and then moved off to the right on a different line he liked better. After the Italians moved off to the normal route, Lowe now made preparations to solo his line and continue on up to finish at the south ridge and thence to the summit. But he was too late. He gained a high point of 7000 meters on May 23, but during the night of May 24 it snowed. So much avalanche debris backed up in the two chutes which met just below his “safe” bivouac site that his tent was buried and it took him three hours to dig himself out. The next day, a snowstorm dumped enough new snow to render the face completely out of condition and it appeared that the monsoon had arrived. On May 25, he quit. Meanwhile, Destivelle and Decamp had been climbing on the west buttress but there was too much snow on this route too after May 24. Strong winds had delayed their progress earlier in the month. They had reached 7650 meters on May 14 before descending to rest and then unsuccessfully making what they hoped would be their final push to the top.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Makalu Post-Monsoon Attempts.* Four expeditions attempted unsuccessfully to climb Makalu (8463 meters, 27,766 feet). Six Australians and a New