

on the entire vast north face of Everest. He made a serious push for the summit from a camp at 5900 meters on the Rongbuk Glacier at the foot of the great face starting at 2:10 a.m. on September 14. With two bivouacs, one at the bottom of the Great Couloir that night and the next in the couloir on the 15th, he managed to surmount the couloir and reach 8500 meters on the morning October 16.

But now “my condition was not so good” because he had had no sleeping bag during the previous night, and he had become very sleepy. He spent 20 minutes considering his options and decided that he must save his remaining energy for a safe descent. “Ten years ago, I would probably have gone for the summit,” said the 36-year-old mountain guide, but now he was more concerned about his safety. He descended without difficulty or frostbite, but he was very tired at the end.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Lhotse Shar, Ascent.* On Lhotse Shar, the 8400-meter eastern summit of the Lhotse massif next to Everest, a team of 15 Russian climbers led by Vladimir Savkov sent four men (Alexandre Foigt, Evgueni Vinogradski, Gleb Sokolov, Sergei Timofeev) to the top on November 1. But they were forced to abandon what Vinogradski said was their “dream” of traversing from it to the middle summit of the massif. This middle peak (8410m) is the highest point on earth not yet touched by man.

The Russian team was not the first to scale Lhotse Shar with the intention of using it as a stepping stone to the middle summit, only to find when they were on the eastern summit that they were too tired and unprepared for the very difficult traverse at very high altitude, and none of them made an actual move to do so. The Russians this autumn looked at the horrifyingly difficult ridge they would have to move across and decided the better approach would be from Lhotse’s main summit.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Pumori, Southwest Ridge.* The Internet contributed this spring to a new type of awkward situation concerning membership of an expedition. A Swiss, Markus Sofer, saw that a Canadian team was listed for an attempt on Everest’s neighbor Pumori, so he got in touch with them and signed up as a member. But when they met in Kathmandu, he announced that he would be entirely independent of them since he did not believe in expeditions. He did some climbing with the team, led by Tim Rippel, on its seldom-climbed southwest ridge, but most of the time he moved alone. He became the only one to go to the 7161-meter summit, which he reached on May 20.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Ama Dablam in the Post-Monsoon.* As the season began, the Nepalese authorities expected 16 teams to come to Ama Dablam (6812m), but they continued to grant permits to everyone who asked for them, and by the time autumn ended, an all-time high number of 30 teams with a total of 201 climbers had been there from 18 nations. (The previous highest number of teams in the same season was 19 in the autumn of 1996.) Furthermore, all of this autumn’s expeditions had chosen to climb the same route up the southwest ridge, which is quite narrow in some sections. At the busiest time, in mid-October, there were 17 teams at Base Camp

or above. An American leader reported counting 130 tents pitched at Base Camp on one day.

Some teams found themselves having to set up their base camps lower than they had planned because of the crowding. And more problems arose at times as climbers competed for space on the mountain. Queues sometimes formed at constricted spots on the ridge: a five-man Russian summit party had to wait in their descent from the top for one hour while others moved in the opposite direction (they were able reach their last camp only well after nightfall). A pair of American and Canadian climbers had to make an unexpected bivouac because of too many people on the route. Another American "got caught up in the traffic" while coming down from the summit and had to spend the night in someone else's completely empty tent while waiting for daybreak. Lack of space for camping at the site for CII at around 6000 meters forced several expeditions to skip pitching tents at that altitude and carry on somewhat higher to make their "CIII."

Many teams found their total climbing time was much shorter than they had expected since the route had been fixed with rope by the earliest expeditions from bottom to top. In fact, the multiplicity of ropes was actually a source of complaint; at one place there were nine ropes, and elsewhere "an unbelievable amount of useless rope," as one climber reported: thick ropes, thin ones, short ones, long ones, old ones and new ones, in a "mess." Nevertheless, despite the problems, the success rate was excellent. Twenty-nine teams sent a total of 160 people (including 13 women) to the summit.

On their return to Kathmandu, some leaders advised officials of the Nepalese tourism ministry, who give permission for expedition climbing, that there should be a limit on the number of permits issued for Ama Dablam in any one season. Ministry officials said they planned to seriously consider this suggestion, but there is room for doubt that the bureaucracy will actually put such a new rule into effect. Officials may intend to make recommendations to their superiors, but office-holders are changed so frequently that often nothing gets accomplished. Furthermore, ministers like to be able to reward relatives and hangers-on with money-earning posts, and since every team has to take with them and pay a government-appointed liaison officer, there is reluctance to reduce the number of these lucrative jobs.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Kangtega, Northeast Face, New Route.* A seven-man French team (Erwan Le Lann, Francois Marsigny, Sebastien Montaz-Rosset, Francois Pallendre, Franck Plenier, Hervé Qualizza, Sebastien Schell) summited 6779-meter Kangtega in the Everest region southwest of Ama Dablam by what they believe was an unclimbed route on its northeast face. All seven members, led by Francois Pallendre, scaled their very technical route on extremely steep thin ice with two precariously placed bivouacs on the way up.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Kasum Kanguru, Northwest Face.* It was reported that Yannick Graziani and Christian Tromsdörff established a new route, *Tendi*, on the northwest face of Kasum Kanguru. Further details are lacking. (*Klettern February '99*)

*Kasum Kanguru, East Face.* In April, Yasushi Yamanoi of Japan soloed a new route on the east face of Kasum Kaguru (6370m). He started from Base Camp at 4 a.m. on April 21 and