language. In *Below Another Sky* we know where Rick’s story will end, with Asia at the grave of her father and his friend, but it’s the stops along the way that provide resonance and make this intensely personal book a compelling act of literature.

**JONATHAN WATERMAN**

*Above the Clouds: The Diaries of a High Altitude Mountaineer.*

ANATOLI BOUKREEV. COLLECTED AND EDITED BY LINDA WYLIE. NEW YORK: ST. MARTIN’S PRESS, 2001. 290 PAGES, 26 PAGES OF COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS. $27.95.

When the American Alpine Club received the first invitation ever from the USSR to climb in the Pamir, in 1974, Anatoli Boukreev was 16 years old—and just beginning his high altitude training in the Tien Shan. He did some first ascents of 5,000 meter peaks even then. What he went on to accomplish would make him a gold medalist many times over if climbing and taking care of others—in and out of the mountains—were an Olympic sport. He managed despite asthma (probably brought on by coal dust), a bout of meningitis, a car accident, a bus accident, and the collapse of the USSR. The latter resulted in the privatization of sports, and thus no more financial support for Russian climbers.

In *Above the Clouds* the reader learns from a collection of Boukreev’s journals and articles, edited by his companion Linda Wylie, about the life of an athlete/philosopher raised in Kazakhstan. Through several accounts of his signature climbs between 1990 and 1997, we are given great insight and much more depth on the Russian system of training and the team spirit that prevailed there than is found in his Everest book, *The Climb*.

A lengthy foreword by Galen Rowell, who had been asked to accompany Anatoli on what became his ill-fated Annapurna attempt, provides the reader with good reason to read on, to learn about this man. A sample quote: “Anatoli’s fine mind was far more in tune with its body, which it rightly recognized as part of, rather than separate from the natural world....” Having set the stage with comments like this, Rowell also takes some time to put the Everest events of 1996 in perspective.

Linda Wright’s 30-page introduction tells us of Anatoli’s background—his formative years in the coal town Korkino (which means “the last crust of bread”) and later Almaty—both in Kazakhstan—and the Russian style of training: the reliance on team climbing and comradeship.

I had turned down the corners of about 25 pages by the end of the book. When I reviewed what I had marked, I found a consistent reference to his belief that to be in the mountains to the fullest, one needs to train—to “derive pleasure from the process of physical and mental development.” I found that he had gone out many times—often alone—from the safety of camp to find or to give aid to comrades late in returning. And then there was his reverence for the mountains: “It is myself that I struggle with in this life, not with the mountains. Their greatness and strength is indisputable, only man is in transit, evolving, growing, and the road that we choose to follow in life depends less on the surrounding world than on our spirit—the internal voice that pushes one to seek new challenges.”
The book concludes (except for an epilogue and chronology) with a chapter called “Letters from Annapurna,” where Anatoli died in a massive avalanche on December 25, 1997, not long after having been bestowed the American Alpine Club’s David Sowles Award for his rescue efforts on Mt. Everest. There are excerpts from a letter to Jim Wickwire and an interview in which he summarizes his quest: “Speaking honestly, I do not feel fear climbing high; rather, my shoulders straighten square like a bird stretching its wings. I enjoy the freedom and the height.” And then there is the letter followed by the phone call from from “Tolya” to Linda, along with her personal comments and the final call to her from Simone Moro with the sad news. We feel the closeness and the loss through these few pages.

Climber or not, you should read this account for the simple purity and depth of spirit you will find. And let me not forget to mention the wry humor. There are many surprises in store for you.

JOHN E. (JED) WILLIAMSON


The first to summit Mt. Everest along with Edmund Hillary, Tenzing Norgay has a legacy of achievement that lives on in his son, Jamling Tenzing Norgay, and grandson, Tashi Tenzing. Jamling and Tashi are not father and son, but uncle and nephew, descendants of Tenzing Norgay from his third and first marriages respectively, born within a year of each other in the mid 1960s in Darjeeling, India. Both have climbed Everest, Jamling in 1996 and Tashi 1997, and now each has given us his story. Their books fill great voids in that much-lacking Sherpa perspective in the annals of Himalayan mountaineering.

Tashi Tenzing’s book, Tenzing Norgay and the Sherpas of Everest, chronicles the history of the Sherpa people and how they came from Tibet to live in the shadow of the mountain they called Chomolungma, the discovery of the world’s highest peak and its subsequent name change by the Royal Geographical Society in London, the halcyon days of British-owned expeditions out of Darjeeling, and the significant role the Sherpas played from the earliest years of exploration in the Himalaya. If in contemplating the conquering of Everest you have ever asked yourself, What about the Sherpas? Then this is the book for you. Tashi has selected a few but memorable Tigers of the Snows, who represent the many Sherpas of selfless courage and devotion, incredible strength and amazing endurance at high altitude. In carrying the loads and making the camps, the Sherpas made possible the exploration of the Himalaya as well as the historical push of Tenzing Norgay and Edmund Hillary to the summit of Everest that day in May 1953.