

## MANASLU HIMAL

*Manaslu, Kazakh Route.* Kazakh super-high-altitude climbers, Sergei Samoilov and Denis Urubko, followed their very impressive 2005 alpine style new route on the southwest face of Broad Peak with a new route on the northeast face of 8,163m Manaslu. Together with a two-man Russian team, the pair arrived at base camp (4,700m), but were prevented from making much progress on the mountain during the first part of April due to heavy snow. They left for the Normal Route on the 20th and, climbing in alpine style, reached the summit late on the morning of the 25th.

Samoilov and Urubko initially had designs on a new route up the southwest face, but they didn't have a permit specifically for this and were concerned about the depth of new snow on the mountain. However, during their ascent they were able to study the main part of the northeast face to the left and thought it rather more windblown. The left side of this face had been climbed before in 1986, when a primarily Polish expedition led by Jerzy Kukuczka attempted the unclimbed east ridge. The Polish team spent the latter half of September and most of October of that year in bad weather and then finally gave up. On November 5, Carlos Carsolio, Artur Hajzer, and Kukuczka set off up the face immediately right of the lower ridge. Climbing in alpine style, they made four bivouacs, joined the upper section of the east ridge, made the first ascent of the East Summit (a.k.a. the East Pinnacle, 7,992m) and reached the summit plateau, where they bivouacked again at 8,000m. Next day Carsolio, who was suffering from frostbite, stayed put, leaving Hajzer and Kukuczka to force their way to the summit in extreme cold. It was the first time an 8,000m peak had been climbed in November.

Samoilov and Urubko left base camp at 2 a.m. on May 4, which later, by their own admission, was too soon after their previous ascent and did not give them quite enough rest. They left the glacier at 4,900m and started up the face a little to the right of the Polish line. Plowing through deep snow, they made their first bivouac at 5,900m and their second at 6,500m, after more deep snow and a two-hour delay finding a route through a large bergshroud. At this point they were quite close to the 1986 line.

The next day's climbing proved equally exhausting and dangerous, with the climbers setting off small avalanches as they progressed. Above their third bivouac at 7,100m, the conditions improved as they slanted right and reached the lower rocks of the Pinnacle, which they climbed (grade 5 cracks) to a bivouac at 7,450m. Now without food, on the following day they climbed up the far right flank of the East Pinnacle over difficult mixed terrain, all the time accompanied by an increasingly strong wind. Compact granite made the climbing more difficult and the crux was a rock pitch that overhung by three meters. This was thought to be 6a. That afternoon they reached the summit plateau in poor visibility and strong winds. Dumping their sacs, they climbed a 300m couloir and were on top by 6 p.m. That night they camped at 7,600m on the Normal Route and the next day, the 9th, were back at base camp, having now been on the go for the last three days without food. The "Kazakh Route" had difficulties of 70-75° ice and mixed, with 6a on rock. For this ascent the pair were awarded the newly inaugurated Piolet d'Or Asia at the ceremony taking place in Seoul later that year.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*, *CLIMB Magazine*