

On the 28th he resumed his climb. He left his snow hole with the “absolute minimum” of gear. He started up at 6 a.m. despite strong wind and his not having slept, while pondering what to do. It was very cold. After two hours he had gained the east ridge and began to move along the ridge to the east summit; most of the way he traversed a few meters below the crest on the north face, moving carefully, conscious of the danger of cornices breaking under his weight. Furthermore, he had strong wind to contend with, and often had to lie down on the snow and crawl on hands and knees between gusts.

He had expected to reach the east summit at noon, but it was 3 p.m. when he got to the 8,026m top. (The main summit of Annapurna had been Humar’s first 8,000m peak, which he climbed via the north face in 1995.) He soon began his descent, Radioing to Jagat Limbu that he was on his way down the way he had come up. But this also was not easy. The wind had obliterated his tracks, and after it became dark, the light from his headlamp lasted only briefly. He had to wait for the moon to rise at about 7 p.m. to give him sufficient light to climb over the mini-peaks on the ridge. At 8:25 p.m. he was back at his second bivouac, in the snow hole. He brewed hot drinks and slept until 2-3 a.m. on the 29th before completing his descent. His toes had become slightly frostbitten, but he had scaled the face and next day descended to Limbu in four hours. The *piar* then continued down to base camp, reaching it that night.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, AAC *Honorary Member, Nepal*, and LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*,
www.climbmagazine.com

Editor’s Note: Tomaz Humar’s climb was the first solo ascent of Annapurna East, an 8,000m summit originally ascended in 1974 by Spaniards, Jose Manuel Anglada, Emilio Civis, and Jordi Pons, via the north ridge. Prior to 2007 it had only been climbed twice since. Humar climbed to the right of Annapurna’s east rib, the line ascended in 1988 by legendary Poles, Artur Hajzer and Jerzy Kukuczka, who climbed the 1,500m snow and ice spur to the east ridge and then continued up to the east summit. The south face of Kangsar Kang was first climbed alpine-style in 2000 by a three-man French party, but their ascent was not widely reported at the time and until recently remained largely unknown. Humar believed he was climbing new ground, though in fact he followed the 2000 line, the most logical on this section of the face (being exposed to serac fall for only 20 minutes near the bottom of the wall, at ca 6,000m, while the Polish route is objectively more dangerous and for a greater length).

The French acclimatized by camping on the summit of neighboring Singu Chuli (a.k.a. Fluted Peak, 6,501m) for three nights, from where they had a good view of the line. After a rest at base camp they returned with just a tent inner, one 50m rope, and no sleeping bags. They then climbed the face with a bivouac at 6,800m, exiting onto the east ridge of Annapurna, just 200m left (west) of Kangsar Kang’s summit. The climbing involved snow and ice to 60° but no difficult terrain. After a second miserable night just below the crest, the three then attempted to reach Annapurna East, but the wind was strong and, fatigued, they traversed to the north ridge, on which they bivouacked. During the night a storm broke the tent poles and the next day, the worse for wear, they descended the north ridge of Annapurna East and eventually picked up fixed ropes belonging to a French expedition attempting the classic 1950 route. They used these to descend to the north-side base camp.

Annapurna II, first winter ascent. The main success winter success in Nepal was the first winter ascent of Annapurna II (7,937m). Philipp Kunz (German) employed three Sherpas from east Nepal: Lhakpa Wangel, Temba Nuru, and Lhakpa Thinduk, the latter two with no real previous

high-altitude experience. The team followed the route of the first ascent from the north, establishing base camp on January 16 at 5,000m. Strong winds and heavy snowfall stopped activity for a while, but the then Sherpas forced a route to a site for advanced base on the glacier below Annapurna IV, at 5,800m. Kunz joined them there on the 28th. The Sherpas fixed more rope and the whole team camped at 6,600m on the 31st. They spent another night there while working on the route above, then moved up on February 2 to a camp at 7,400m. Next day they camped at 7,600m and on the 4th reached the summit. The crux of the route was a 55° section of mixed rock and snow above 7,100m. In all the Sherpas fixed 2,500m of rope, a hard job in the very cold weather and one which Kunz realizes would have been much easier with a bigger team. They had planned to have six camps above base but found this was not possible, due to lack of available sites. Only one other party had previously attempted the peak in winter: a 1983 British expedition, which failed to make any real progress because of deep, unconsolidated snow.

Annapurna II has only had five confirmed ascents. The summit was first reached in 1960 by the British-Indian-Nepalese Services Expedition led by Jimmy Roberts. They placed camps up the north face/northwest ridge of Annapurna IV (7,525m), following the route of the first ascent of that mountain by Germans in 1955. By the middle of May they established Camp 5 on a shoulder of Annapurna IV, where the long west ridge branches off to Annapurna II. After a slight loss of altitude, they found a place for Camp 6 near the base of the summit pyramid at 7,200m. Two Sherpas established this camp while Chris Bonington, Richard Grant, and Ang Nyima started out from Camp 5 and climbed all the way to the summit. The route up the final pyramid followed a 45-50° rock rib interspersed with boulders and perched slabs, giving difficult rock climbing. Yugoslavians from Slovenia repeated this ascent in 1969, also climbing Annapurna IV. In 1973 Japanese shortcut the route by climbing directly up the north face between IV and II before continuing along the west ridge. Katsuyuki Kondo reached the top in a remarkable solo performance. Koreans may have repeated the original route in 1989. Some of the expedition climbed Annapurna IV, and later two members radioed that they were close to the summit of Annapurna II on the west ridge and would have to bivouac on the descent. They disappeared but are generally credited with having reached the top. The only ascent that has not taken place from the north was in 1983, when a strong Australian team climbed the south face.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*, www.climbmagazine.com, and RICHARD SALISBURY, *The Himalayan Database*

DAMODAR HIMAL

Chako, first ascent. A 10-member Kanagawa Alpine Federation party, led by Tatsumine Makino (62), made the first ascent of Chako (6,704m), via the southwest ridge. The team approached via Nar Gaon and Phu Gaon, making their base camp on July 9 at 5,100m below the snout of the glacier south of the Lugula Himal. This site has running water and is conveniently situated for attempts on both Bhrikuti Shail and Chako. Above the snout, with its ice cave, the team moved up the glacier, passing a clean stream and a three-stepped waterfall, then more moraine, to place Camp 1 at 5,500m on July 13. Sixty to 90 minutes above this camp was a triangular rock and above this, at ca 5,900m, the party began to fix rope. At 6,000m they reached a snow plateau and at 6,200m, on the southwest ridge, found a small space below a large ice block, on which they could situate two tents. They established this Camp 2 on the 16th. Above a rock