

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.

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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



Chako (6,704m), a remote border peak in the Damodar Himal, remained unattempted until last year, when it was climbed via the southwest ridge by a Japanese expedition. Seen here is the west face, bounded on the right by the ridge climbed by the Japanese and on the left by the northwest ridge leading toward the Lugula Himal *Lindsay Abbotts*.

barrier from 6,500m to 6,550m the ridge became narrow and quite steep, at one point forming an exposed section of vertical rocky terrain. The climbers continued fixing rope all the way to the summit, which Kazuhisa Kamisaka and Akio Omura reached at 11.50 a.m. on the 24th, accompanied by Hari Bahadur Chaulagai and Ang Phuri Lama, the latter a 60-year-old Sirdar from Beni. Chako lies on the Tibetan border, and the summiteers noted that the Tibetan side was a steep pyramidal rock face. The party descended to Camp 2 by 4 p.m., but at around that time an avalanche destroyed one of the tents. No one was hurt, and the two Sherpas continued their descent, past Camp 1 and all the way to base. The Japanese slept in the remaining tent and reached base camp the following day. This was the first attempt on the high Damodar summit.

The team then planned to climb Bhrikuti but after reaching 5,800m on the south ridge, decided it was too avalanche-prone and descended. The expedition now began a trek towards Khumjungar (a.k.a. Khamjung or Khumjung, 6,759m), which lies northwest of Chhiv. It has no recorded ascent, though it may have been climbed by Japanese in 1982. However, the Lapso Khola was too swollen to cross, and any attempt to reach the mountain was abandoned. (Earlier in the year Khumjungar had been reconnoitred by Pete Athans and Renan Ozturk.) The two Americans reached the Chame valley in March but found the snow too deep to make progress toward the peak). The Japanese then moved south and on August 7 climbed the trekking peak of Chuli West by the west ridge. After this they crossed the Thorong La to Muktinath and continued to the base of their next objective, Gaugiri. By that time they were too tired to make an attempt and instead walked to Lho Manthang, where on the 27th they found that their proposed route to Arniko Chuli in West Mustang (6,034m, climbed by Ohnishi and a Sherpa couple in 2002) was not feasible. Locals were harvesting their crops and believed that if foreigners entered the area, the crops would be ruined. The team gave up on the peak, its final goal, and trekked back down the Kali Gandaki to Beni, where they took the bus out to Kathmandu.

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