

They were last seen 500 feet short of the summit. The four summiters saw them with binoculars going up as they were on their way down to Base Camp. The climbers had reached the hump of a very difficult ridge at 22,000 feet above the final camp. When those descending looked again, they were not to be seen. The weather turned bad and vision was obscured. Sherpa Ang Nima, who had been in the ill-fated second summit team, was saved as he had been left behind. The helicopter search had to be April 26 because of the weather and could not be resumed the next day. Despite continuing foul weather intensive ground and air search parties were sent out but without success. Finally the leader Lieutenant Colonel Narinder Kumar himself set out. Kumar feels they may have fallen down the 8000-foot precipice to the Tibetan side. After the Ministry of External Affairs asking Peking whether it knew about the fate of the officers, at first the Chinese expressed "surprise", but subsequently replied that they had sent out search parties who found no trace of the climbers. A unique feature of this expedition was the extensive use of bamboo ladders, which proved useful and economical.

KAMAL K. GUHA, *Himalayan Club*

Nepal

Mount Everest, Fifth Ascent. The expedition of the Japanese Alpine Club had 23 climbers, four doctors, three scientists and nine journalists, plus 45 Sherpas. The overall leader was 71-year-old Saburo Matsukata; climbing leader was Hiromi Otsuka. Base Camp was established at 17,500 feet on March 23. They were camped on the South Col on April 28. On April 21 Kyoshi Narita died of what was described as heart failure at Camp I at 20,000 feet. (Could this have been high-altitude pulmonary edema?) The Sherpa Kyak Tsering died in the Khumba Icefall under a collapsed sérac. The highest camp, Camp VI, was on the south summit. On May 11 Teruo Matsuura and Naomi Uemura reached the summit and on May 12 Katsutoshi Hirabayashi and the Sherpa Chottare repeated the climb. A woman, Setsuko Watanabe got to the South Col, probably a woman's altitude record. The southwest-face party reached 26,400 feet. In the post-monsoon season of 1969, the Japanese climbed to nearly that high up a broad couloir that rises from the floor of the Western Cwm. The couloir is barred at above 26,000 feet by the central buttress. In 1970 there was much less snow than in the previous fall and progress was slower than it had been when more of the climbing was on snow. There was more

rockfall. On May 10 Iwao Kano and Hiroshi Sagano reached 26,400 feet and had a good look at the central buttress. There seem to be possibilities either of continuing to the left and onto the west ridge or of continuing up a deep chimney towards the Yellow Band and up the face. They abandoned the effort because of heavy rockfall.

Mount Everest Ski Expedition. There were two Japanese expeditions at the same time on Mount Everest. The ski group were not interested in any attempt on the summit but was rather a publicity stunt for the exposition in Osaka. They lost six Sherpas when in early April a sérac fell on them in the Khumbu Icefall at 19,000 feet. A seventh died of exhaustion. Despite these deaths they continued and established Camp V at 26,200 feet on the South Col. From there on May 6 Yuichi Miura descended the Lhotse Face on skis. He reported speeds of almost 100(?) miles per hour over a two-mile stretch. Using a parachute to slow himself down, he took a severe fall which nearly ended in a crevasse.

Lhotse Shar. The east peak of Lhotse, Lhotse Shar (27,504 feet) was climbed by an Austrian expedition from the Tirol led by Siegfried Aeberli. Base Camp was at 17,150 feet on the western lateral moraine of the Lhotse Glacier. They approached the southeast spur from the west and the col between Lhotse and Island Peak and climbed up the south face to the crest of the spur. Camp I was at 19,700 feet, Camp II at 22,000 feet, Camp III at 23,300 feet above the "roof" of the face on the spur's crest and Camp IV at 25,000 feet. All camps had snow caves for shelter. Almost the whole of the route from below Camp I to Camp III was fixed with rope as climbing was very difficult. As high as Camp III they found signs of the Japanese attempt of 1965, which failed at 26,000 feet. The summit pair, Josef Mayerl and Rolf Walter, left Camp IV on May 12. A broad slope without real difficulties led to a false summit at 26,000 feet, which they reached in three hours without oxygen to save it for the last part. There they were separated from the final face by a wild, corniced ridge, up which they front-pointed on good snow. After reaching the face, they continued up equally steep slopes. A long traverse left took them to rock, which saved much step-kicking. The final hundred feet were even steeper ice and then soft, rotten snow. At 12:30 they broke through the cornice to the summit. The descent was made in nearly zero visibility in clouds. The next day a second summit attempt by Walter Larchner and the Sherpa Urkien was stopped 800 feet below the top when oxygen equipment iced up. Other members of the expedition were Rüdiger Lutz, Dr. Gerd Garbeis and Hansjörg Köchler.