

attempt, followed on May 17 by Tanaka and Pemba Lama and on May 19 by Matsuda and Mitani. On May 20 at 3:30 P.M. Tanaka and Taguchi got to 28,700 feet or 8750 meters, but they were unable to climb the last 300 feet to the top because of fatigue and lack of oxygen.

SHINICHI NAKAJIMA, *Meiji Alpine Club, Japan*

*Mount Everest Attempt.* This two-man New Zealand group, Russell Brice and W.C. Freaney, failed to climb Mount Everest from the Western Cwm. They established four high camps. High winds finally drove them back at 25,000 feet on October 5.

MICHAEL J. CHENEY, *Himalayan Club* and ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Lhotse, Winter Attempt.* An Italian expedition attempted a winter ascent of Lhotse. The members were Pier Antonio Camozzi, leader, Agostino Da Polenza, Uberto Testa, Graziano Bianchi, Mauricio Santinello and Dr. Felice Boselli. After delays in the customs and in flying in, they arrived at Lukla on January 1 and at Base Camp on January 6. They used two Sherpas primarily in the Icefall and two others to carry to Camp II. Camp I was established on January 16 and Camp II on the 20th. On January 28, after an attempt to reach the South Col, they heard on their radio that the Japanese were giving up their Everest attempt because of wind and cold. The Italians found the Lhotse Face more difficult in winter since the snow was blown off, exposing bare ice. On January 29, two Italians climbed to 24,775 feet, where they established Camp III. The Sherpas refused to help above Camp II. On February 1, in a comparative calm, the two climbed to the top of the Geneva Spur. They pitched a tent, left oxygen and advanced a few hundred meters along the nearly horizontal shelf that led to the couloir up which the normal route on Lhotse ascends. They were driven back by wind. The next day another attempt to cross failed at about 26,400 feet. Da Polenza reported that he could see that the 1500-foot couloir was nearly devoid of snow. The last 650 feet would have been extremely difficult ice and rock. They gave up. All were back in Base Camp on February 3.

*Lhotse, South Face.* Detailed study of previous attempts resulted in our deciding on a classical style with a 22-man team, plus a doctor, radioman, two TV men and a cook. We fixed rope and had a running chain of climbing teams working one after the other on the face. Sherpa support was only on the lower face. Our first goal was to escape avalanches. Much of the 3000 feet below the west shoulder is overhanging. (The shoulder is some 1300 feet below the summit.) Left and right of the overhang are possibilities. The right was more directly towards the summit. The left one looked promising since we could finish on

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*Photo by Aleš Kunaver*

**LHOTSE's South Face.**



the west face in case of unexpected difficulties near the summit. We eventually tried both routes from Camp VI. This year's spring conditions complicated work on the face. Short periods of climbing in the morning ended daily in snowfall at noon. Immediately the face smoked with avalanches and made us keep our heads down in shelters. We often ascended without time to make advance preparation on the route because of the weather. Protecting teams on the face was another problem. The rock had no bends nor small protective overhangs and was mostly exposed snow and ice. We had brought metal tent platforms but did not use them because of avalanche danger. We had some frame tents with a vertical side to be dug into the wall over which avalanches would pass and used snow caves wherever possible. Normally we pitched one tent at a campsite first and immediately tried to dig a cave. It worked except at Camp II, where the ice was mixed with sand and stones, and at Camp V, where the snow was too shallow and soft. Our first group reached Base Camp on the western glacial moraine of the Lhotse Glacier on March 16 via Lukla. The second group could not fly to Lukla until March 21 because of bad weather and reached Base Camp four days later. Camp I was under the first rock band at 19,000 feet. Four rope ladders were fixed on the rock step above Camp I. Camp II was first established on April 4 at 21,000 feet and later reestablished after avalanche damage. We placed Camp III at 22,300 feet below the first big overhanging part of the face. Camp IV at 24,125 feet was placed on a snow saddle connecting a small rock tower with the face. Ladders were fixed below Camp IV and in the big rock wall above it. Camp V was established at 25,750 feet in a snow gully in the center of the Yellow Band on May 1. Shallow, unstable snow and avalanches made this camp the worst of all. In the last part of the climb the camp was avoided and carries were made directly to Camp VI. Camp VI was placed on May 8 at 26,400 feet. The snow quality changed from sand mixed with water ice in the middle part to soft, unstable snow from Camp III above. Until May 14 all efforts were made on the direct route to the summit ridge. Two attempts were made on May 10 and 14. On the second, Pavel Podgornik, Andrej Štremfelj and Nejc Zaplotnik pushed from Camp VI up the east (right) side of the overhang and onto the last rock step below the exit onto the snow ridge at 27,075 feet (8250 meters). At eleven A.M. they had to stop because the upper ridge was swept by strong winds and drifting snow. On May 18 Vanja Matijevc and Franček Kenez made a last effort to exit from the face onto the west shoulder via the left variation. At five A.M. they left Camp VI, traversed the upper snowfield left and followed the steep and extremely unstable terrain on the upper edge of the exit slopes. The weather was bad; by eight A.M. the mountain was in fog above 23,000 feet. At noon it looked as if they would have to return. Loose snow made the approach to the ridge risky. They kept

on until they were at 26,575 feet (8100 meters) at six P.M. All they could see was fog in the Western Cwm. Because of the risky return, they first planned to descend into the cwm and be helicoptered from the icefall, but the plan was abandoned and they returned to Camp IV at four A.M. after 23 hours of uninterrupted climbing. Two days later Base Camp was cleared and the 63 days of climbing on the south face finished.

ALEŠ KUNAVER, *Planinska Zveza Slovenije, Yugoslavia*

*Lhotse, Bulgarian Expedition.* The Bulgarians had 18 members and seven Sherpas under the leadership of Christo Ivanov Prodanov. They set up their Khumbu Base Camp on March 23. Camps were established at 19,900, 22,300, 24,125 and 26,100 feet between April 1 and 27 in changeable weather. On April 30 Prodanov set out from Camp IV up the Reiss couloir without oxygen. As he neared the summit, the weather deteriorated with wind, snowfall and lightning. He therefore avoided the ridge and climbed the face to the summit. Ognian Pretrov Baldshijski and Metodi Stefanov Savov had started out in the morning with him but were badly delayed by difficulties with their oxygen equipment and turned back when the weather went sour. This was the fifth expedition to climb the mountain and Prodanov was the 25th climber to reach the summit.

JÓZEF NYKA, *Editor, Tatarnik, Poland*

*Lhotse Shar Attempt.* A Basque expedition from Spain failed in the pre-monsoon period to climb a new route on Lhotse Shar, a south ridge to the southeast face. They made two camps and two bivouacs above Base Camp. The leader, Xabier Erro, fell ill and so the team was actually reduced to only three climbers. Two men reached 7550 meters (24,771 feet) and then were defeated by fierce winds.

MICHAEL J. CHENEY, *Himalayan Club* and ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Lhotse Shar Ascent and Tragedy.* A large Swiss expedition comprising six climbers, doctor, cook, two photographers and five research workers from the Department of Physiology at Geneva University planned to spend three months in the Lhotse area. The leader, Joseph Fauchère, had attempted Lhotse's east ridge in 1978 and it was hoped to repeat this attempt to the top of Lhotse Shar and to continue along the one-kilometer-long unclimbed rock ridge leading over the two central summits to the main summit of Lhotse. The party set up its base south of Lhotse at 17,000 feet on September 16. Four camps were built along the east ridge with the help of Sherpas and the route was secured with fixed ropes. The climbers used oxygen equipment. At 4:30 A.M. on October 16 four Swiss and two Sherpas left Camp IV at 23,450 feet for the summit. At