

section, listing the thirty-eight persons (five Americans) who have so far perished on Aconcagua's endless slopes. One can only hope that this guidebook may someday be translated into other languages as well.

EVELIO ECHEVARRÍA

*A Guide to Trekking in Nepal.* Stephen Bezruchka. The Mountaineers, Seattle, 1981. 256 pages, black-and-white photographs, sketch maps, glossary, bibliography. \$8.95.

*A Guide to Trekking in Nepal* is the best and most comprehensive guidebook of its kind. Its wealth of information should be as complete and indispensable to the traveller in Nepal as *The Joy of Cooking* is to the American cook.

Dr. Bezruchka opens with an up-front discussion about different styles of trekking—possibly the most important decision each trekker must face. Many guidebooks present large commercial agencies as the only sensible way to travel; thus, leaving readers with different tastes without a choice. Although the author is in favor of small groups, he succeeds in presenting all possibilities fairly and completely.

Travelling halfway around the world with no idea of what to expect can be disconcerting. This book deals with all the burdensome details such as visas, trekking permits, airplanes and how to hire a Sherpa. There is a section devoted to health matters (as useful in the field as in advance planning) and a chapter of communicating with the people of the country together with a glossary of common words and phrases.

The standard treks and a glimpse of other possibilities are fully detailed to aid in planning one's trip. There is a map of Nepal and nine additional maps of the standard routes. Personally, I like a small group and a vague map; but for those who want them, incredibly detailed route descriptions are also provided.

Chapter 4, "Interacting with Nepal," is really the heart of the book. Everyone should read its message carefully. "Nepal is there to change you, not for you to change it. Lose yourself in its essence. Make your footprints with care and awareness of the precarious balance around you," writes Dr. Bezruchka. "Take souvenirs in your mind and spirit, not in your pockets. Nepal is not only a place on the map, but an experience, a way of life from which we can all learn."

VERN CLEVENGER

*The Breach: Kilimanjaro and the Conquest of Self.* Rob Taylor. Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, New York 1981. 254 pages, photographs, diagram. \$14.95.

Big climbs can establish and affirm friendships; they can also destroy them. International expeditions are most subject to the occupational

hazard of bitterness and recriminations, with cultural incomprehension heaped upon the strains of altitude, isolation and effort. Even small parties, the long-standing refuge from such worldly difficulties, have produced ill will instead of inspiring memories. For here the claims of personality are particularly severe; weeks of hard mountaineering may turn minor character quirks into the stuff of open antagonism.

But what if there is little congeniality to begin with? Rob Taylor presents his relationship with the pseudonymous Harley Warner as the conjunction of two climbing virtuosi of utterly differing temperaments. Warner "was born and brought up in the exclusive community of Wildwood. . . . Early on he accepted the dogma of the dollar," and he makes his sensational climbing achievements pay their way with lectures and endorsements. Taylor, on the other hand, grew up in Sudbury, Massachusetts, "only a few miles from Thoreau's cabin on Walden Pond." As a child he romped in the fields with his brother and sister and didn't think about money. Despite their differences, the Taylor-Warner partnership did carry them up a steep frozen waterfall in Norway and to the top of Mount Kenya's fabled Diamond Couloir. But the moment questions of judgment arose, not all the climbing skill in Africa could avail them. Hence their Kilimanjaro disaster, which even a little teamwork apparently could have mitigated or prevented altogether.

In January 1978 Taylor and Warner challenged the then unclimbed Icicle route on Kilimanjaro's Breach Wall. This account well conveys the isolated immensity of the place—a huge flank of rock and glacier rising to the highest point in Africa, a volcanic summit plateau wide enough to get lost in when the mists rise. Moving quickly despite indifferent weather, the two men reach the base of the Icicle itself, at some 18,000 feet, a "dripping rotting cylinder of ice stretching three hundred vertical feet to the top of the Breach Wall." Such a prospect requires at least a strategy session, but that was out of the question for these two: throughout the book they talk past rather than to each other. So against his judgment and instinct Taylor leads twenty feet up the Icicle until it shatters; the resulting fall leaves him with a compound fracture of his left ankle and questionable chances of survival, with a single companion and help many miles below and away.

The account of Taylor's rescue, with his own cool courage and the heroic efforts of the Norwegian Odd Eliassen and African rangers, is worth the price of the book. It should inspire climbers who may be tempted to renounce hopes of extricating themselves from perils in remote places. But *The Breach* attempts far more than to tell this story: its subtitle bespeaks its central ambition. Yet here the book is weakest. Even for the most gifted writers, "The Self" is a hard beast to snare. Pursue it as one may through the wilds of memory and deception, it has a way of slipping off just when you think you have the creature

pinned down at last. Taylor grows to believe that "there comes a time, at least once, when our past catches us up. . . . For me this day of reckoning came upon the Breach. I knew then, while still on the Wall, that I could blame no one but myself for my lack of assertiveness." This entirely convincing insight is preceded by pages of heavy introspection, suffused with allusions to Hemingway and memories of Taylor's companion Dave Knowles, killed in an Eiger rockfall in 1974. These sections are often overwritten, in keeping with the pseudo-poetic epigraphs that Taylor has unwisely intruded between his chapters. His conclusion, "those final days in Africa I lost my vision, that inner vision we must all have to carry on, to aspire, to be," sounds Conradian; but like most of us, Taylor cannot write much like Conrad. The search for self needs to be conveyed with greater literary power than Taylor yet commands.

The narrative passages are more successful. Taylor's story is not merely arresting but shocking. In contrast to the introspective sections, Taylor here shows considerable restraint in describing what most readers will regard as a betrayal: for after tearing down the mountainside and arranging for help, Harley Warner vanishes. He does not assist in the rescue, does not even remain in the country to verify the recovery of the companion whose safety—Taylor's brief description is unambiguous—he had failed to guard at the moment the Icicle cracked. Perhaps neither Taylor nor we should have been surprised at the desertion, since Warner has been portrayed all along as obsessed by considerations of time and money. From his first appearance at the Boston airport, when he rushes off to phone ABC in New York, to his last, again in Boston at the hospital where Taylor is recuperating, Warner seems concerned only with himself. He never has second thoughts, much less regrets. He sums up the Breach: "I am not sorry for anything that I have done and would do the same thing again in similar circumstances." When he is hospitalized in Tanzania, where patients are traditionally cared for by relatives and friends, Taylor has to rely upon people whom he had not even met before his accident: the Eliassens and a sympathetic American couple. Warner had gone to Houston for a sports convention.

It is not only Warner's personality that is indicted in this book, but his mountaineering judgment as well. Although portrayed as a dazzling technician, he is granted virtually no alpine sense. At the top of the Diamond he plunges on in avalanche-prone snow instead of keeping to the rock as Taylor insists. He seems oblivious to the danger of a debris chute on Kilimanjaro and ignores the treacherous condition of the Icicle. Worst of all, he is inattentive when his companion is leading: his casual rope-handling transforms "what should have been no more than a very short, three- or four-foot fall" into something far more serious. Taylor's judgment on his companion strikes me as disingenuous: "An avalanche is not malicious unto itself, nor was Harley. He was what he was. I

had simply failed to recognize this." Warner is drawn as something far worse than a force of nature unleashed: as unremittingly vain, shallow, and even duplicitous to the point of implying to Taylor's family that he took part in the rescue and ascribing the length of the fall to the failure of an ice screw (which actually held). Taylor may seem to present us with a choice between two sharply different personalities, but he makes it extremely hard to choose Warner.

"Harley Warner" is for general consumption only. Followers of alpine literature will identify him with a well-known New England climber of very similar name. There are at least two sides to every story; Harley's should soon be available. Meanwhile *The Breach*, for all its flaws, gives its own account commendably.

STEVEN JERVIS

*The Way to Shambhala: A Search for the Mythical Kingdom beyond the Himalayas.* Edwin Bernbaum. Anchor Books, Garden City, New York, 1980. 316 pages, black and white photographs, glossary, bibliography. \$6.95.

In his remarkable study, Edwin Bernbaum charts the unchartable. This work is neither history nor myth but an intriguing mix. It is well researched and imaginative, blending lofty speculation with candid anecdotes. The author, a veteran of years of personal investigation in Nepal, with a particular interest in preserving Tibetan texts, uses the lure of Shambhala's mystery to draw his reader into philosophical interpretations and mystical imaginings.

The Tibetan tradition of referring to Shambhala as a hidden, northern kingdom that preserves the secret teaching of Buddhism and from which a future king will come forth to destroy evil and usher in a golden age of peace and wisdom is the focus of Bernbaum's Himalayan search: a search for experience as well as fact.

The investigation opens with a sketch map of Shambhala showing eight petal-shaped regions and the king in his central palace within rings of snow mountains, and proceeds as a quest for mystic truth, "the inner kingdom" which Shambhala symbolizes. By defining Shambhala, Bernbaum clarifies the often baffling complexity of the Buddhist universe with its multiple plateaus of wisdom and experience.

"Historically," the learned doctrines that are believed to be preserved in Shambhala for the great golden age to come are attained in particular stages so that the seeker can "view each stage as a recapitulation in miniature of the entire path to liberation." As the philosophical questions concerning its nature become more abstract, the search for the real Shambhala continues: perhaps it is in "the place of ice" (Khet-sun Zangpo), on another planet (Chugyal Rinpoche), or obscured by