Rowell, Messner, et al, that the lackluster point-and-shoot photographs of this book are disappointing.

Yet it would be a disservice to the reader to end this review on the same sour note as did the British expedition. Joe Tasker disappeared in 1982 with Peter Boardman while the two were boldly attempting another first route on Mount Everest without oxygen, in an even smaller—this time truly democratic—expedition. Joe Tasker deserves a better epitaph.

In his splendid book, *The Shining Mountain,* which describes a brilliant two-man ascent of Changabang with Tasker, Boardman paints a far more sympathetic picture of Tasker than comes through in the cool, distant writing of *The Cruel Way*. Tasker himself wrote a second book *Savage Arena*. Printed in an edition of only 5000 copies, it was impossible to obtain in time for this review. Scheduled for reissue, this book, I have heard, is probably one of the finer mountaineering works to have come out in a long time. It, not *Everest the Cruel Way,* is what we should remember Joe Tasker by.

TOM HOLZEL

A Walk in the Sky: Climbing Hidden Peak. Nicholas Clinch. The Mountaineers, Seattle and The American Alpine Club, New York, 1982. xii + 214 pages, black and white and color photographs, map. $18.95.

Millions of years ago, a mighty and inexorable clash of drifting continental plates pushed against one another and created a group of huge peaks on what is now the eastern border of Pakistan. Five of these summits are higher than the magic number of 8,000 meters, which is 26,247 feet (not 26,268 feet, as stated on page xi or 26,240 feet, as stated on the book's dust jacket). One of them, Hidden Peak (26,470 feet) is the highest of the Gasherbrum group and was the only eight-thousander whose first ascent was made by Americans. Author Nick Clinch was the driving force behind the expedition and now his book, written in 1959, has finally been published.

Nick's friends, myself included, know him as an outstanding mountaineer-politician, who has been both the friend and the protégé of the elders of our tribe, the bridger of generation gaps. He is a cajoler of the recalcitrant and, of course, a fine mountain climber with strong powers of endurance. Combine these qualities and you have what it took to organize and mount a successful assault on Hidden Peak, on a marginal budget, by a small party of enthusiasts, who learned as they went along.

The expedition was first conceived in 1954, on a climbing trip in British Columbia. From then on, Nick pulled strings, wheedled, improvised and recruited, as described in Chapters One to Three. He says that without Laurence Coveney, the expedition "would never have been more than a pile of papers inside a manila folder." One of Nick's most important achievements was to persuade, by repeated pressure ("I bombarded him with special-delivery

letters and long-distance phone calls") the redoubtable Pete Schoening to join the group; he was the only one of its members with "eight-thousand-meter experience."

Chapters Four through Nine describe, with many hilarious anecdotes, the journey from Skardu to Base Camp. The delights of Balti buttered tea are chronicled on page 57:

> ". . . the lambardar's son brought out a brackish mixture of thoroughly boiled tea, ghee, salt and other ingredients that remained unknown. 'But this isn't regular tea, Tas,' I protested. 'Oh, no. From here on all we'll have is Balti tea,' he smilingly replied. I took a whiff and warned Pete not to smell it. Making a mental note to avoid all further invitations for tea, I watched with horror as Schoening gulped down the contents of his cup. Now everyone was looking at me. The United States' reputation in Baltistan seemed to depend upon my drinking that tea. 'How did you do it, Pete?' I whispered. 'Simple. I followed your advice and didn't smell it,' he whispered back.
>
> "I remembered how General G. O. Bruce, leader of the 1922 British Everest Expedition, had adroitly extricated himself from a similar situation involving yak butter tea by informing his lama host that he was on a pilgrimage and had to forego the things he enjoyed most, which unfortunately included buttered tea. Lacking both the gall and the skill to use that ruse successfully, I kept placing the cup to my lips but was unable to take the fatal step. It was just about time for us to leave and my cup was still conspicuously full, when suddenly our porter train came into the village and the men began to disperse among the trees."

Chapters Ten to Thirteen are about Camp II and the big push upwards to establish the higher camps, with the help of high-altitude porters. (I wonder do high-altitude porters still receive cigarette rations as part of their compensation?) Finally, Camp V was set up at about 24,000 feet.

Chapter Fourteen, "The Summit," is by Pete Schoening. He and Andy Kaufmann left Camp V, where they had been alone overnight, at five A.M. and made the climb, with the aid of oxygen, by three P.M. The weather was clear. They got back to camp by 7:30 P.M. on July 5.

Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen describe the return. The epilogue tells what has happened to members of the expedition—and to climbing—since 1959.

There are several unusual things about this thoroughly enjoyable book. It was written in 1959 and, except for a short preface and an epilogue, has been published unchanged twenty-three years later. On the dust jacket, there is a photograph of the Free Hungarian flag that was taken to the summit "in memory of some very courageous people" (page 176): a people who were ruthlessly suppressed by the man who now heads the government of the Soviet Union.

One year after the trip, the author's photographic memory enabled him to recall many conversations and minute details. His style is easy, garrulous and

humorous. He says in the Introduction, "I am not the same person that I was in 1959." But the publication of *A Walk in the Sky* brings to us a vivid account of those days, twenty-four years ago, when eight young Americans and two Pakistanis decided that they could do without the elaborate financial and political support that was customary for most expeditions, and succeed they did.

Time and again, from start to finish, the enterprise barely surmounted a long series of hurdles that might have stopped it. As member, Bob Swift, said, the expedition was "at the precise limits of the equipment, finances, physical endurance and imagination we then possessed." After all, to reach such limits, but not to exceed them, is why people climb.

THOMAS H. JUKES

Kongur: China's Elusive Summit. Chris Bonington. Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1982. 224 pages, black and white and color photographs, maps, bibliography. £14.95

In an age when mountaineering is concerned primarily with approaching old problems in a different style—a new route, a harsher season, a smaller party, sans oxygen—it is stimulating when an expedition sets time back, undertaking real exploration before challenging a virigin summit. This was the mission of a team led by Michael Ward (overall expedition and scientific leader) and Chris Bonington (climbing leader) in getting to and climbing Mount Kongur and recounted in *Kongur: China's Elusive Summit.*

What a delicious opportunity this must have been, a kind almost overlooked in the contemporary scramble to raise the purely technical standards of climbing. The team was the first to visit a remote, long-closed and culturally exotic region (western Xinjiang) at a historic time when China was turning away from the traumatic path it had followed since 1949 and opening its doors to foreign mountaineers. During the 1980 reconnaissance, they were given virtual carte blanche to roam at will in fascinating high country, picking off a few satellite peaks. Then, in 1981, in clean style, with a four-man climbing team, they made the first ascent of a 7,719-meter mountain that refused to fall until the waning moments of the battle. Thanks to the efforts of a four-man scientific team, much valuable data on the effects of high altitude was also contributed.

Given these colorful and dramatic experiences, Bonington should have had a field day in the literary presentation of the venture. By almost any standard, the book is very good. But, I suppose, as is true with any well known and respected figure, we expect continued excellence. As I read, I couldn't shake the feeling that Chris had perhaps written one too many expedition books; his heart may well not have been totally in it. Even so, it is very good.

His books on Annapurna and Everest's Southwest Face have a vitality which the Kongur book lacks. The nuggets of quotable quotes are missing. I mention this because, after all, we buy books as much to get close to the author