

Bataillon F. Leray and other Indians reached the summit of Kabru Dome. A total of 16 Indians climbed the peak. The climb was comparable to the Brenva Face of Mont Blanc.

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## Nepal

*Yalung Kang from the North and Tragedy.* Our Slovene expedition had as its objective the first ascent of Yalung Kang from the north. There were several possibilities. The most attractive but the least sure and most dangerous was to follow the north buttress directly to the summit. The north ridge seemed a little easier but longer and more exposed to the same ice avalanches as the north buttress. A third possibility was to climb one of the existing routes on the north face of Kangchenjunga and traverse right to Yalung Kang. We were 14 climbers: Filip Bence, Tomo Česen, Tomaž Jamnik, Silvo Karo, Pavle Kozjek, Dr. Damjan Meško, Slavko Svetičič, Borut Bergant, Janko Humar, Janez Jeglič, Franc Knez, Marjan Kregar, Peter Pedgornik, journalist Braco Zavrnjak and I as leader. On March 9 the first group of ten members and four Nepalis (liaison officer, Sherpas, etc.) left Kathmandu. Only on March 21 could the last five members and seven Nepalis set out because of a cargo shipment delay. The first group got to Base Camp at Pangpema at 5050 meters on March 25 and the second on April 6. Reconnaissance on the north buttress and north ridge approaches began on March 26 and on the north face route the next day. After we reached the site of Camp I at 5720 meters, we decided to continue on Warth's 1983 route on the north face of Kangchenjunga to the snow couloir between Kangchenjunga and Yalung Kang and then go across snow slopes and the ridge to the summit of Yalung Kang. Later a party of four would try from Camp II to climb the north buttress alpine-style. On April 1 we established Camp I. From April 2 to 8 we climbed and fixed a steep ice step between 6000 and 6200 meters and pitched Camp II at 6520 meters on April 9. From April 10 to 14 the steepest part of the face was equipped with fixed rope from 6700 to 7350 meters and on April 15 Camp III was pitched at 7350 meters. On April 16 Bence and Podgornik climbed the hardest part (UIAA VI) of the face at 7500 meters and reached the snow slopes which led to the rocky summit pyramid of Yalung Kang. On April 19 Kozjek reached the Camp IV campsite at 8100 meters and the next day Karo and Knez established the camp. On April 21 Bergant, Česen and Pemba Nuru Sherpa carried oxygen there; Pemba Nuru returned to Camp III. On April 22 Bergant and Česen left Camp IV, Bergant climbing without artificial oxygen. From the couloir between Kangchenjunga and Yalung Kang they reached the east ridge of Yalung Kang, which they climbed on the south side on bad rock. At 2:30 P.M. they found a good passage around the rocky crest and at three P.M. got to a not very steep snowfield which led them to the summit (8505 meters, 27,903 feet), which they reached at 4:30 P.M. There they found a bamboo stick of the Korean expedition and they left Česen's oxygen bottle.

They took photos of Slovene and Nepali flags and at five o'clock left the summit. During the ascent and descent the weather was fine. From the last difficult place in the snow couloir, some 225 meters above Camp IV, at nine P.M. as they prepared a rappel, Bergant slipped for no apparent reason and disappeared. Due to crevasses above Camp IV Česen stopped, made a narrow terrace in the ice slope and walked all night in order not to fall asleep and get frostbite. The radio had fallen with Bergant. At seven A.M. on April 23 Česen reached Camp IV. As he descended, he looked and found no traces of his friend. At 10:30 he met Bence and Podgornik and via their walkie-talkie sent a report of the accident to Base Camp. We decided to give up the expedition. On April 24 we searched for Bergant on the face below Camp IV. Because of new snow and avalanches, we found nothing. We evacuated all camps except Camp IV from April 24 to 27. On April 28 we had a memorial service near Base Camp and cut Bergant's name on a big rock.

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*Kangchenjunga, North Face Attempt.* We arrived at Base Camp at Pangpema on April 6 after a 13-day trek. The team consisted of John Roskelley, leader, Dr. Robin Houston, Gregg Cronn, Kim Momb, Canadian Laurie Skreslet and me as assistant leader. We reached the North Col (23,500 feet) on April 22 after 27 pitches of mixed ice and rock. The route was to the right of the British route and partially the same as that followed by Messner and the New Zealanders. The leading and fixing of the headwall to the ridge was done over a period of seven days by the entire team. We shared the north side of the mountain with the Yugoslav Yalung Kang team, which had been in Base Camp two weeks before us. From April 22 when we reached the col until May 13 when John Roskelley and Kim Momb got to the high point of 25,600 feet, we carried loads and established camps on the col and at the base of the sugarloaf. Early on the morning of May 15 Gregg Cronn began to suffer symptoms of cerebral edema at Camp III. Laurie Skreslet assisted him in the descent to Camp II on the col, where Roskelley and Momb were. Oxygen was given and Skreslet and Momb helped Cronn to descend the fixed lines to Camp I, where Robin Houston and I met them and aided him in getting to Base Camp in about 14 hours from Camp III. His recovery was complete. We decided to abandon the mountain on May 16. There were many reasons. We were exhausted both from the rescue and the 45 days on the mountain. Supplies were low in all camps, particularly those on the ridge and the prospect of resupply and a chance at the top were remote. Sherpa porters were not used above Advance Base at 17,000 feet and we used no artificial oxygen for climbing. Lines were fixed on the route to the North Col. Objective danger both from rock- and icefall is significant on all routes on the north of Kangchenjunga. The route we did was clearly the safest.

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