

marvelous route, 1250 meters high, alpine grade TD sup. By the evening of the fifth day, we were back in Base Camp.

STEPHEN VENABLES, *Alpine Climbing Group*

*Mera.* A group of fourteen French youths between the ages of 13 and 17 made the ascent of the trekking peak Mera (6414 meters, 21,043 feet). On the descent they skied from 6300 to 5300 meters at the tongue of the glacier. They were from the Collège Saint Exupéry of Bourg Saint Maurice and led by Michel Folliet and Philippe Bonano.

*Lhotse Attempt.* A Spanish expedition led by Juan Fernando Azcona attempted to climb Lhotse via the west face. They reached 7650 meters on October 4 before having to retreat.

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*Lhotse Attempt.* American Peter Athans and a companion reached 7600 meters on the west face of Lhotse on October 11 but could not continue higher.

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*Mount Everest, Illegal Attempt.* Frenchman Marc Batard has become so enmeshed in controversy with the Nepalese authorities that there is doubt that he will ever return to Nepal to climb again. He gained fame in September, 1988 by achieving what is still the fastest ascent of Everest, 22 hours and 29 minutes, from Base Camp at 5350 meters to the summit at 8848 meters via the normal South Col route. This was not a solo climb, for there were a number of other climbers at various points, and indeed several of them went to the top before him on his own summit day. He went to Everest's summit a second time in October, 1990 in an unsuccessful attempt to become the first person to climb Everest and Lhotse in the same day. Unfortunately, Batard manages to quarrel with other climbers. In that expedition there was a dispute between him and a Nepalese woman, Mrs. Pasang Lhamu Sherpa, whose ambition was to become the first Nepalese woman, and the twelfth woman from any nation, to surmount Everest. In late September, she left the mountain in great anger, claiming that Batard had stopped her from going to the summit from their highest camp. He has stated—and so have climbers from another expedition who were also at the high camp—that she was not strong enough at that time to reach the top. However, according to Batard, he invited her to join him in a second attempt soon afterwards, but she refused to continue climbing. Her husband, the head of a trekking agency in Kathmandu, lodged with the Nepalese Ministry of Tourism a protest against a foreigner's forcibly preventing a Nepalese woman from climbing a Nepalese mountain. Stories went around Kathmandu that Batard had manhandled her, even beaten her—all charges he has consistently denied.

Batard came to Nepal again this spring to try once more to try for a double Everest-Lhotse success, to reach Everest's summit late on an afternoon, spend the night there, descend the next day to the South Col and climb Lhotse. In Kathmandu he understood from a Tourism Ministry official that permission was again promised, and he went to the mountain. He climbed to 8200 meters on May 1, but strong winds stopped him and he retreated for a rest at Base Camp. There, he learned that he had not in fact been granted a climbing permit, and therefore he abandoned his climb. It is not clear why he had not received permission. However, for having climbed without an official permit, Batard is liable to be banned from entering Nepal for five years or from mountaineering activities in the country for as much as ten years. Whether the authorities will actually take action against him is not yet known, but the matter has become irrelevant. On his return from Everest, he stated, "I have been very badly victimized in Nepal this time by those making charges and withholding my permit. So, with my heartfelt salutation to those brave and powerful people in Nepal, I have decided to cancel all my future climbing activities in Nepal." He had planned to return to Everest in the autumn, but to those who were scheduled to climb Everest with him later this year, he would offer to go with them to a high mountain of their choice in South America or Pakistan.

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*Everest Attempt.* A six-man Australian expedition was led by Michael Groom. They first attempted to climb the west ridge of Everest from the Western Cwm, getting to 7400 meters on April 24. They then turned to the South Col route, where they reached a high point of 7900 meters on May 1.

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*Everest, Southwest Face Attempt.* Our expedition was composed of Chung Woo-Sub, Nam Sun-Woo, Heo Jeong-Sik, Jung Gwang-Sig, Choi Tae-Sik, Cho Kwang-Je, Lee Sang-Lock, Park Young-Seok, Kim Jin-Sung, Koo Kyeong-Mo, Kim Seok-Jun and me as leader. We attempted Bonington's route on the southwest face. We established Base Camp, Camps I, II, III and IV at 5400, 6050, 6450, 6920 and 7600 meters on March 31, April 5, 7, 17 and 23. Camp IV had two box tents. On April 28, we fixed rope to 8300 meters where we hoped to pitch Camp V with one small bivouac tent. On May 1, Nam Sun-Woo, Kim Jin-Sung and sirdar Ang Tshering pushed up to the Camp V site, where they could see the south summit across the rock band and the refuse from previous expeditions around the site. There was not enough snow on which to pitch the tent. After the sirdar descended, the two Koreans bivouacked sitting up in the fortunately not too cold night. On May 2, Nam tried to climb the rock band, but after only 50 meters he found it impossible. Three centimeters (1¼ inches) of new snow made it impossible to ascend the rock and the snow was too thin for crampons. On May 3, I gave up the expedition because the snow would not