

On September 29, McKerrow soloed a 5000-meter peak above the Chamar valley. [More details appear in *The New Zealand Climber*, Summer, 1994, N° 12.]

Southeastern China

Gonga Shan Attempt and Tragedy. On August 25, Hitoshi Watanabe, Takuya Fukuzawa, Sachiko Takada (f), Yasuyuki Watanabe, Yosuke Suzuki, Junji Kudo and I as leader established Base Camp at 3950 meters near the tongue of the Yanzeko Glacier north of the peak. Camps I and II were placed on the glacier at 4200 and 4950 meters on August 30 and September 6. We climbed the staircase-like glacier on the west face of the northeast ridge, fixing 33 ropes. Camp III was put just below the northeast ridge at 5850 meters on September 19 and on the 20th four climbed the spur that joins the northeast ridge to 6050 meters, fixing seven more ropes. After some bad weather, at eleven A.M. on September 28, Fukuzawa, Y. Watanabe, Suzuki and Kudo radioed from Camp III that they had collected loads from the glacier and would climb to prepare the route higher. At three P.M., nobody answered me by walkie-talkie. They must have been lost in an avalanche. On the 30th, Hitoshi Watanabe and I climbed to Camp II but could find nothing with binoculars. On October 1, we tried to dig up fixed ropes to get to Camp III, but we could find only four of the 33 fixed ropes in the avalanche debris. We gave up the search to avoid a double accident.

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Tibet

Kula Kangri Region, 1993. A seven-member climbing-and-scientific French party, including geologist Arnaud Pêcher, visited the Kula Kangri area in southern Tibet on the Border with Bhutan. Base Camp was at 4450 meters below the northern foot of Kula Kangri. They placed Advance Base at 5400 meters and reconnoitered the western glaciers. On May 21, 1993, Pêcher, Richard Jessup and Guy Sévenier climbed a virgin peak of 6000+ meters. The expedition also included Jean-François Porret, a paraplegic as a result of a parapente accident in 1989. Using a wheelchair, he completed some impressive mountain trips in the vicinity.

JÓZEF NYKA, *Editor, Tatarnik, Poland*

Kula Kangri, Second Ascent. An Austrian expedition consisting of Gerhard Berger, Anton Dollfuss, Dr. Martin Donner, Kurt Ebner, Helmut Ortner, Otto Plattner and me left Kathmandu on April 14, crossed into Tibet at Kodari and traveled east through Xegar and Xigatse to Base Camp at 5200 meters north of Kula Kangri. (The peak lies north of Bhutan.) Berger had to leave the expedition because of high-altitude sickness. Camp I was established at 5700

meters, 15 kilometers up a moraine-covered glacier, complicated by an icefall. We then attacked the west ridge, the only route not objectively dangerous. On April 27, Ortner, Plattner and Dollfuss attacked the northwest face of the west ridge, an ice slope with angles up to 70°, and reached a shoulder on the ridge at 6200 meters. On April 29, Ebner and I climbed with gear to the shoulder. The next day, we returned to the shoulder, climbed a 60-meter ice step and placed Camp II at 6400 meters. We all fixed about 400 meters of rope. After a stormy night, on May 1 Ebner and I set out on the summit attempt in cold, clear weather. Climbing for 40 paces and then resting, we headed for the rocky foresummit on ever-steepening ice. At 7100 meters, we slabbed onto the south flank to avoid the foresummit. To our amazement, we found there a tent from the 1986 Japanese expedition. Ebner reached the summit (7554 meters, 24,784 feet), but I turned back at 7400 meters. On May 3, Ortner, Plattner and Dollfuss also climbed to the summit. On April 21, 1986, Japanese C. Itani, J. Sakamoto, H. Ozaki and E. Ohtani had made the first ascent, also by the west ridge, followed the next day by T. Morinaga and H. Hasegawa.

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Everest from Tibet in the Pre-Monsoon. The Nepalese government's limited number of permits to climb Everest from the south is clearly having its effect. In the spring of 1993, fifteen expeditions on the Nepalese side put a total of 81 men and women on the summit, 40 in a single day. This year just four teams climbed from Nepal, while on the Tibetan side, the number of expeditions rose from four in 1993 to nine in the spring of 1994. Six climbers reached the summit from Tibet and there were four deaths. Not a single climber of any commercial expedition on the north side was amongst the summiters—indeed, probably no commercial team's client has ever summited from the north. While the total number of all climbers who have reached the highest point on earth now stands at 548, just 108 have done so via any route in Tibet. While 37 climbers were summiting from the south, men and women on the northern slopes were frequently pinned down in their camps by winds that were fiercely strong and cold—winds from which the great solid mass of Everest tended to protect southern climbers. Another factor that defeats more climbers from Tibet is the altitude of the final camps. The normal routes above the high camp on both sides are about the same in length—perhaps slightly shorter on the north—but the camp on the standard North Col route is at about 8300 meters and on the standard southern route is now invariably on the South Col only at 7900 meters. Thus, summiting Everest from the north means that most climbers spend two nights and an entire day at or above 8300 meters, while on the south they are at this altitude for only eight or ten hours. Furthermore, on the north there are serious technical difficulties above the high camp: the Yellow Band of unstable rock, the First and Second Steps and a last section of difficult rock just below the summit's snowcap. On the southeast ridge, there is the famous Hillary Step, but it forms a relatively small section of the final day's climb. The descent down