

Altitude Pulmonary Edema, which even today kills the unwary who go to the mountains. For 40 years he has studied problems caused by lack of oxygen, exploring the mechanisms of Man's acclimatization to high altitude on mountains and in decompression chambers. He has enlarged our understanding of acute mountain sickness, high altitude retinal hemorrhage and cerebral edema and has written many books and scores of articles about mountain medicine and his own climbs. Since 1975 he has organized the world renowned International Hypoxia Symposia. Dr. Houston has climbed in the Alps, Alaska and the Himalaya, leading expeditions to Nanda Devi, K2 and the first reconnaissance group to the south (Nepal) side of Mt. Everest."

*International Alpine Solidarity Award.* AAC Member Daryl Miller was presented with the Silver Plaque of the International Alpine Solidarity Award by the guides of Pinzolo, Italy. This award honored Miller for rescues performed during his work as a Denali National Park mountaineering ranger on Mt. McKinley. The soft-spoken Miller accepted the award on behalf of all the rangers and other rescue workers involved in McKinley rescues. Miller works as team member and commonly as coordinator on the National Park Service patrols, where he makes the tough decisions affecting the safety of both victims and rescue crews. He is well-respected by climbers, guides, and the various officials involved in mountain activities. In typical fashion, Miller gives credit to all members of the rescue crews who work in extreme conditions to protect the safety of all parties on the mountain.

## ASIA

### INDIA

#### SIKKIM HIMALAYA

*Kirat Chuli (Tent Peak), Attempt.* The Sachsischer Bergsteigerbund and the Akademische Sektion Dresden (two local sections of the German Mountaineering Association) carried out a Youth Expedition from September 17 to November 11, 1995. The 11 team members from Dresden were 22 to 32 years old. For most of the members this was their first Himalayan climb. The idea was to give young climbers the chance to collect as much Himalayan experience as possible and to be involved in high altitude mountaineering as high as possible. The ambitious aim was to climb "Tent Peak" (Kirat Chuli, 7365 m), following the historical route of the first ascent of a Swiss-German team in 1939. It is still the only one. The Sikkim Himalaya was chosen with respect to its unique rich nature and its important role in German mountaineering history.

The approach started September 29 from Lachen (2730 m) with 36 porters and 18 yaks via Zemu Chu. On September 29, the Base Camp at Green Lake (4900 m) was reached with a breathtaking few to the virgin south face of Kangchenjunga. Because of the lack of information about North Sikkim (our planning was based on the 1939 descriptions) we had to spend several days exploring the most promising route over the Tent Peak Glacier and Nepal Gap Glacier. Ice conditions have changed considerably since 1939; due to glacier recession, unexpected serac zones appeared. Finally Camp I was established on October 7 at 5500 meters on the right hand of the Nepal Gap Glacier. Over the now-even upper Nepal Gap glacier we erected Camp II on October 10 at 6000 meters. After a failed try to reach the south ridge of the Nepal Peak via an ice ridge, we climbed a snow gully right of Upper Nepal Gap and continued to the right hand over easy but fragile rock where we found old fixed ropes. We also decided to fix these passages

with 200 meters of rope. Doing this we could avoid dangerous overhanging snow passages on Nepal Peak ridge starting above Upper Nepal Gap.

We established Camp III on October 15 at 6300 meters on a small plateau on Nepal Peak ridge. Facing strong wind we followed the direct line to Nepal Peak. Being stopped by an ice barrier, we set up Camp IV at 6600 meters in a crevasse. The weather turned bad and on October 21 we returned to BC. However on October 24 the party of Jens Webersinn and Mattias Goede overcame and fixed a narrow steep (70°) ice gully above Camp IV. The last obstacle was overcome. On October 25 Mattias Goede, Jens Webersinn and Ulf Lehnert scaled the visually highest point in the neat surroundings at around 4 p.m. despite heavy cold wind. The altitude was 7150 meters. To continue the one and a half kilometer ridge to Tent Peak the same day was out of question because of heavy and cold wind—not to mention that climbing the ridge during the first ascent in 1939 took three days. A bivouac under these conditions would have been hard to survive. They returned to Camp IV just before darkness with slightly frozen fingers and toes.

The next day Uta Seemann, Ulf Koritz and Wolfram Schroter reached their high point at 10 a.m. but were also turned back by wind and cold. The sky was clear and in spite of heavy cold wind we enjoyed the wonderful view to Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal and Sikkim with its numerous snowy peaks. The highest of them are Kangchenjunga, Kangbachen, Tent Peak, Simvo and Siniolchu. Totally frozen, we hurried to return down to life. The fall storms seemed to have already started. There was no time for another summit try. On October 27 Base Camp was dismantled. All material from high camps, all fixed ropes, etc., were completely moved down. Luckily we had not a single accident. This Tent Peak attempt was made without high altitude porters. On October 30 the last party left BC enjoying the beautiful colors of late autumn in the Zemu Valley.

WOLFRAM SCHROTER, *Deutschen Alpenverein*

*Northern Sikkim, Various Ascents.* Only one expedition gained permission to climb in Sikkim during 1996. After prolonged, extensive and persistent negotiation, an eight-man Anglo-American group led by Doug Scott became the first western mountaineers since the early 1950s to be allowed to travel to the Northeast, where a group of very beautiful, largely unclimbed and challenging peaks lies close to the border with Tibet.

Until shortly after Partition, the mountains of Sikkim were among the most accessible in the Himalaya and the history of their exploration starts as far back as the end of the 19th century (W.W. Graham and two Swiss guides climbed Forked Peak, 6108 m, and Jubonu, 5936 m, in 1883). Early this century a number of the foremost mountaineers of the day were attracted by the many supremely beautiful peaks that lie generally on or close to the Sikkim-Tibetan frontier. Kangchenjunga was of course well-known to climbers from before the turn of the century, but Western eyes were first opened to the peaks in northeast Sikkim from 1907 onward by the Aberdonian chemist, Dr. Alexander Kellas. Kellas visited Sikkim on no less than six occasions between 1907 and 1920 and probably traveled and climbed more extensively throughout the country than anyone else since. Little is known of the man or his achievements due to his retiring nature and the fact that he wrote so little of his exploits. Apart from one occasion, when he brought European guides as companions, he climbed solely with a loyal group of local porters. In 1910 he made 10 first ascents of peaks over 6000 meters, including Pauhunri (7125 m), at that time the highest peak in the world to be climbed, and Chomoyummo (6829 m)—a remarkable feat even by today's standards. He joined the first Everest expedition in 1921 but fell ill on the way through Tibet and died aged 53.