

The climb followed the route of the 1969 Japanese expedition during the first ascent of the peak. CI was established at 4950 meters on the Kaphe-Kola Glacier. C II, at 5800 meters, was set up on September 18 on a ridge, just on the top of a rocky buttress that rises from 5000 meters up to 5750 meters. During the climb of this buttress we found fixed ropes, but most of them had to be replaced since they were in very bad condition. We put almost 500 meters of new ropes on this section.

From CII we had to descend almost 100 meters down to a three-kilometer plateau. We had carried snow pickets for this section, but found them to be worthless. The plateau took us to the bottom of the Gurja Himal pyramid. From here to the summit we found very deep snow, which made the ascent very strenuous. We put CIII at 6100 meters on September 19 on the northwest side of the pyramid. The next day, with good but very cold weather, we left CIII for the summit at 4 a.m. By 11 a.m. we reached the west ridge at 6800 meters. Here, we could see the impressive 3000-meter-plus south face of the Gurja Himal, which remains unclimbed.

At this point two of the climbers decided to return to CIII due to the deep snow. The two others kept climbing the ridge. At 2 p.m. Pedro Nicolás, the team leader, reached the summit, where he stayed for a few minutes. On the descent he met Jose L. Fernández, and both together decided to turn around and go down. After a short rappel Fernández fell 300 meters down the steep north face, creating a snow avalanche. Due to the deep snow he suffered only minor injuries. Both climbers reached CIII by 6 p.m. The next day the four climbers descended to BC. On September 26 the group started the return, reaching Baglung four days later.

PEDRO NICOLÁS, *Club Peñalara de Madrid*

*Mount Ratnachuli, First Ascent.* The first mountaineers ever to set foot on Mount Ratnachuli were this autumn's expedition from Japan's Shinshu University and the Nepalese Police Mountaineering Foundation. Their 7035-meter peak stands on Nepal's border with Tibet north of Mount Manaslu and was forbidden to any climbers until the police managed to get the Nepalese authorities to put it on the permitted list for this climb. This expedition of eight Japanese and four Nepalese members under the leadership of Mitsunori Watanabe and the climbing leadership of Osamu Tanabe, both Japanese, made their approach from the west and surmounted the west peak and west ridge to reach the top in three waves of summiters on October 14, 16 and 18 after heavy snowfall had subsided. All eight Japanese members (who were aged between 20 and 54 years), three Nepalese members and five Nepalese high-altitude porters succeeded on their very long but not technically difficult route.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Manaslu, Ascent, and Fourth Person to Climb All 14 8000ers.* On Manaslu, Mexican Carlos Carsolio on May 12 became the fourth person ever to scale all 14 8000ers—and the first of the four to come from a non-European country—when he and his brother Alfredo, the only climbing members of their team, gained this mountain's 8163-meter summit. At 33, he is the youngest of the four who have summited all the 8000ers: the previous youngest was a Swiss, Erhard Loretan, who was 36, and those before them, Reinhold Messner of Italy and Jerzy Kukuczka of Poland, were 44 and 39 years old respectively. Carlos is also the only person to have reached the tops of as many as four 8000ers in a single year (he summited Annapurna I and Dhaulagiri I last spring and Gasherbrums I and II last summer).

During their ascent of Manaslu by its normal northeast face route without any supplementary

oxygen, he and his brother felt the fury of the storm of May 10-11 and were forced to stay an extra day in their tent at 7100 meters by the new snowfall, strong wind and static electricity in the air. They were able to resume their ascent in the evening of the 11th although it "was very difficult to orient ourselves [in continuing stormy weather] and the snow was very deep so we were very slow," he said. They climbed on through the night and into next morning. When they reached the summit plateau, the snow had stopped falling, so "at least we could see," but the winds continued to blow—"it took us the whole day to get to the summit because we had to fight with the wind." They finally were on top at 6 p.m., May 12, and found there the Buddhist prayer flags a Tibetan team had left a week earlier. They spent their summit night in a very windy bivouac without tent or bivouac sack, moving about and talking to each other. When daylight came, the skies were clear but still the winds blew. They at last reached their 7100-meter camp at 3 p.m. that afternoon and "then we were safe." Now they could sleep for the first time since 8:30 p.m. on the 11th.

"I am very happy, very satisfied to have done all the 8,000ers," Carlos said after returning to Kathmandu. What next? "There are many Himalayan faces to be done" one day.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Manaslu, East-Northeast Face, Ascent and Tragedy.* We (Sergio Martini, Leader; Renzo Benedetti, Luca Campagna, First Group; Abele Blanc, Marco Camandona, Paolo Obert, Adriano Favre, Claudio Rosset, Second Group) left on foot from Gorka on September 1. Benedetti, Campagna and I went up the Bhuri Gandaki, reaching BC (4900 m) on September 10. The caravan, besides us, included the Liaison Officer, one Sherpa, one cook, a kitchen boy and about 40 porters. The other five members of the expedition reached BC 15 days after our arrival. On September 13, we made CI at 5700 meters; on September 20, CII (6600 m); on September 25, the north col bivouac, at 7050 meters; on September 26, CIII (7400 m). The preparation of the high altitude camps was made easier thanks to the fixed ropes placed by the Japanese Konishi-Ishikawa expedition, which was already present. Between the north col and the beginning of the highest plateau, the itinerary we followed was more to the right than the original route.

An area between CI and CII, at about 6300 meters, was extremely dangerous because of serac fall. On September 27, at 4 a.m., we left CIII, which consisted of a small tent mounted on a small snow foothold close to an overhanging serac. After two hours of climbing along very steep slopes, we reached the plateau at 7600 meters. Then, not far from the unstable highest slopes, we joined the Japanese Ishikawa with his two Sherpas and a Korean with his Sherpa. We covered together the last stretch to the summit of the mountain, which we reached at 11:30 a.m. Shortly thereafter my two expedition mates arrived also.

Since the early hours of the morning the weather had been getting progressively worse. Sleet and strong wind blowing in gusts characterized the day. The poor visibility made tracking down the way back through the plateau seriously difficult. After another overnight stay at C2 we returned to BC.

The Japanese Konishi, a well-known figure in the West, disappeared on the descent from the summit on the highest plateau.

Three members of the second group of my expedition (Blanc, Favre, Obert) reached the summit on October 13 after a lengthy bad weather period, during which many tents of different camps were destroyed by the heavy snowfalls.

SERGIO MARTINI, *Italy*