

December 26 at Base Camp.

Three days later, I was once again in a helicopter trying to fly over the avalanche and possibly see my friends still alive. Unfortunately, there still is no trace of them today, apart from what remains of Anatoli in the pages of the history of alpinism.

SIMONE MORO, *Italy*

*Dhaulagiri VII, North-Northeast Face.* (This first-hand account supplements the notes written on page 304 by Elizabeth Hawley in last year's Journal.) The Singapore Dhaulagiri VII Expedition, which I led, took place from September 26-October 27, 1996. We made the approach via Dunai, trekking east through Tarakot and along the Barbung Khola river. Heavy snow on the trek delayed progress as the team began moving south and up along the flanks of the Kaya Khola. Base camp (4500m) was reached six days later. Dhaulagiri VII, also known as Putha Hiunchuli, has seen few attempts by the north-northeast face since its first ascent by the route in 1954, and none since 1978.

The route began with a long march over moraines and some dry glaciated stretches. It steepened as a broad shoulder was climbed from Camp I. There were vertical rock and ice bands on both sides of this shoulder, so the route on the northeast face was rather obvious. The shoulder linked the lower snow slopes to the upper terrace. Camp II at 5900 meters was placed just beyond the skyline. After that, broad, featureless, gentle slopes lead to a short summit ridge, which runs from left to right (as seen while on the northeast face) to the summit, a small snow dome. We used no fixed rope and all climbing was done unroped. Camps were placed at 5300, 5900, and 6300 meters over the period of October 7-13. The only other party on the rarely climbed route was a French party comprising about six professional guides and an equal number of Sherpas. The initial advance party of Y. J. Mok, R. Goh, M. B. Tamang and Mingma Sherpa were poised for a summit attempt on the 13th, but strong windstorms on the nights of October 14-16 and an extended period at 6300 meters made them fall back to BC. The support team of S.C. Khoo and I moved up from the 5900-meter camp to the 6300-meter camp on the 15th.

The two Sherpas rejoined us and we went for the top on the 16th. Despite the successful French ascent days earlier, there were no traces of a trail owing to the week's windstorms. We reached the summit at about 12:45 p.m. after six hours of climbing on mainly soft, crusted snow. Ours was the fourth ascent of the peak by this route.

On October 18-19, after all the camps had been taken down, R. Goh and M. B. Tamang climbed from Base Camp to the summit and back in a round trip of about 36 hours. Dhaulagiri VII is the first 7000er climbed by a team from Singapore and, at the time of writing, the highest peak to be climbed by climbers from the tropical island. The team comprised: D. Lim, S. C. Khoo, R. Goh, Y. J. Mok, S. Yogenthiran, M. Sherpa and M. B. Tamang.

DAVE LIM, *Singapore*

*Tukuche, Ascent and Attempts.* It was reported that three teams attempted Tukuche (6920m) in the pre-monsoon. Bart Vos (NL) made the first ascent when he climbed the northwest ridge from the French Pass on April 10. Dutch climber Aad Buijtdijk and partner relied heavily on Sherpa support later in the season but were able to reach only 6300 meters by May 1. A ten-member Australian team attempting the same line reached the south summit on May 3 but were unable to progress farther. (*High Mountain Sports* 179)

*Nepal, Various Winter Ascents.* In the winter of 1996-97, only four expeditions came to Nepal,

one each on Ama Dablam, Annapurna I, Makalu and Pumori. One Korean expedition, led by Park Young-Seok, reported success on Ama Dablam by its standard Southwest Ridge route; another, led by Um Hong-Gil, reached 6850 meters on the Dutch North Rib of Annapurna I; and a Manuel Gonzalez-led Spanish expedition reached 7200 meters on Makalu's northwest ridge. But the more interesting ascent of the season was accomplished by a six-man French team led by Christophe Profit on 7161-meter Pumori. First, Profit and a colleague scaled the mountain by its normal Southeast Face route. Then they went around to Pumori's south pillar, which had not been climbed since its first ascent in 1972. Profit and three teammates followed this pillar much of the way but then moved over to the right up an ice gully. It was a difficult climb with several steps of vertical rock, but they accomplished their ascent without fixed camps, fixed ropes or Sherpas. (They went down by the normal route since they had fixed no rope for a descent by the pillar.) Altogether, it was "a very nice adventure," Profit said with quiet satisfaction.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Manaslu, Ascents and Tragedies.* Peter Sperka, an experienced mountaineer and ski alpinist from the High Tatras, organized the Slovak expedition to Manaslu (8163m). They had bad weather and conditions. In spite of this, they pitched Camp III at 7400 meters, where mountaineers from Spain and Japan were also camped. Three Slovakian climbers (Peter Sperka, Miroslav Rybansky and Juraj Kardhordo) waited there for better conditions, which had been promised by the Sherpas. In the morning of October 8, the weather cleared up and all climbers set off for the summit. The Slovak climbers were last. Juraj Kardhordo, who three months earlier had summited GI and GII, was slowest. During the expedition, he suffered from slight stomach problems. The Spanish climbers reached the summit first at 2 p.m., then the Japanese climbers, using oxygen. Just before 5 p.m., Peter Sperka, together with one Spaniard, reached the summit of Manaslu, half an hour after Miro Rybansky from Spisska Nova Ves. During the descent, they met Juraj Kardhordo. Sperka tried to persuade Juraj not to continue to the summit because of the late hour. But Juraj felt OK and continued. Rybansky met him 150 meters from the summit at the beginning of fixed ropes leading to the sharp ridge. He was the last to see him alive. Juraj did not return to the last camp, and the next day, the Japanese found his ski pole and his bag at the beginning of the fixed ropes. Sperka is convinced that Juraj made it to the top of Manaslu, and probably fell from the sharp ridge because of very strong winds in an area where there were no fixed ropes.

The descent from Camp III in deep snow was very dangerous. Both of our mountaineers suffered frostbite, but walked together with the Spanish and Japanese climbers nonetheless. But the tragedy of our expedition was not finished yet. Miro Rybansky died suddenly at the fixed ropes. It was probably a sudden heart attack or a collapse from total exhaustion after a long stay at high altitude. This is a cruel price for the summit of Manaslu.

VLADIMIR LINEK, *Jamesak*

*Manaslu, First American Ascent, and Last 8000er to be Climbed by an American.* On September 11, on Manaslu's standard Northeast Face route, Dr. Alan McPherson Jr. (British) and I placed Camp I at 5800 meters above the rock band south of the Naika Col. We spent our first night at Camp II (6850m) on September 20. Because of the ice-fall danger, we limited our forays between Camps I and II, deciding to spend more time acclimating down low before pushing high. Camp II was placed in a sheltered spot below a serac wall, just under the exposed North Col. Camp III was placed at 7500 meters, amongst some rocks on the edge of the sum-