

move to go over to Everest. The weather was becoming unsettled that afternoon, and, more importantly, the normally very strong Boukreev was not now in good health: He suspected he had picked up a lung infection in Kathmandu, and his April ascent of Everest and descent to Kathmandu doubtless did not help. Moro had no interest in trying to go to Everest alone, so both men turned down and reached base camp the next day.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Lhotse, First American Female Ascent.* It was reported that on May 26, Christine Feld Boskoff became the first American woman—and second woman ever—to climb Lhotse. She had climbed to Camp IV (7805m) by her husband, Keith Boskoff. After waiting out a day of storms, Keith was not up to the ascent, so Christine continued alone to the summit, which she reached at 12:30 p.m. (*Climbing* 171)

*Lhotse Intermediate, Attempt and Tragedy.* Vladimir Bashkirov, a Russian climber who summited Everest with his Indonesian employers this season had, amongst his many accomplishments, led the successful first attempt to climb the very steep south ridge of a peak known as Annapurna South (7219m) in 1994. While he was engaged with guiding an Indonesian team via the north ridge on Everest, some of his Russian teammates had been fixing rope and pitching camps up Lhotse's West Face route while others had attempted to prepare a possible descent route for him and several colleagues, who would traverse from Lhotse to make the first ascent of the middle summit of the massif. This exit route was to be on the south ridge of a peak named Shanti Shikhar (or Shartse II) next to the massif's eastern summit, Lhotse Shar. Although his friends had not reached the top of Shanti Shikhar, Bashkirov said in Kathmandu after his descent from Everest and before going to Lhotse, that he still believed it could provide a good descent route from the east from Lhotse Shar.

No one had ever tried to reach this middle peak, known as Lhotse Intermediate (8410m), which is the world's highest unclimbed peak and is guarded on each side by a very difficult ridge at great altitude connecting it with Lhotse's main summit and with Lhotse Shar. On May 4 Bashkirov came down to Kathmandu, then flew back to the mountains with Anatoli Boukreev on about the 10th, and arrived at base camp in apparent good health a week after that, ready to make the first traverse across the great Lhotse massif.

Bashkirov, who already had six other 8000-meter summits to his credit, got to the top of Lhotse on May 26. He was among the last of his summit party of eight Russians to arrive there; he told a teammate that he had a slight fever, and he explained to a member of another team climbing the mountain at the same time that he was waiting for the last of his party to come up. When the last of them, including Bashkirov, got to the top, it was late in the day, nearly 4 p.m. The weather was very cold, visibility was poor, and Bashkirov was not well.

Neither he nor any of the others tried to make the traverse to Lhotse Intermediate. Instead, they all turned down toward the shelter of their camp at 7700 meters. But Bashkirov never got there. He managed to descend to 8000 meters unaided, then collapsed and was pulled down the snow slope to 7900 meters, where he was found to have no pulse or any other signs of life. He had died of exhaustion and perhaps the same infection that Boukreev had gotten. His teammates buried his body on the mountain in snow inside a sleeping bag.

Is the traverse from Lhotse to the middle summit to Lhotse Shar possible? His deputy leader, Vladimir Savkov, who did not climb above base camp, answered "it is very, very, very difficult" along the sharp, steep ridge. Said one of the men who did summit that fatal day, Gleb Sokolov, "maybe" it is possible, but he would like to try traversing from Lhotse Shar to