

On September 27, all of us except the doctor climbed Pangpema Peak (6200m), which was in the immediate vicinity of Base Camp. We continued with acclimatization on September 29. At the same time we decided to set up some Advanced Base Camps for further ascents. Uroš Samec and Jernej Bevk headed for the foot of Kirat Chuli. The next day they ascended up to 6400 meters on the south ridge of Pathibara, while the rest of us, accompanied by two porters/assistant cooks, established ABC (5510m) at the intersection of Ginsang and Long Ridge glaciers. On September 30, the entire team set off for Peak 6470m (6350m according to Jan Kielkowski's book, *Jongsang Himal: Przewodnik Alpinistyczny, Part I*) on the southwest ridge of Langchung Kang. To provide even better acclimatization, we set up a bivouac about 1100 meters below the top. On November 1, all nine of us reached the top of Peak 6470m and descended down past ABC to Base Camp.

We then planned a three-day rest and afterward some serious attempts to climb the summits. Urban Ažman and Andrej Markovič left BC on November 4. Their intention was to climb the central gully of the south face of the South Summit I (7350m) of Jongsang Peak in alpine style. The others departed BC the following day. Samec and Bevk planned to go to the west face of Nepal Peak to acclimatize additionally before climbing Kirat Chuli. Jernej Breščak and Matej Kovačič began up the west ridge of Pathibara on November 6. Matija Klanjšček and Blaž Stres went over the Long Ridge Glacier to the south face of the South Summit II of Jongsang Peak. Grega Kresal, Miha Marenčič and I decided to climb the left gully of the south face of Jongsang Peak's South Summit I.

Markovič and Ažman began their route on November 6 at 2 a.m. They climbed the gully and, at 5 p.m., they were the first people to stand on the South Summit I of Jongsang Peak, having established the route *Touch of Silence* (VI/4, 1200m) in 15 hours. They traversed to the South Summit II and started descending in the vicinity of the central pillar, as we had determined to do while studying photos of the peak in BC. Due to weariness and darkness, they turned left too soon and encountered a steep rocky area. They arranged an abseil on a snow picket. Ažman used the rope only to help in his descent, whereas Markovič was tired and wished to abseil. The picket pulled out while he was abseiling and he fell the entire length of the face to the bottom. Ažman descended to Long Ridge Glacier alone unroped and with a lot of luck. Stres and Klanjšček, who had, on November 7, already started ascending their route, found him there, exhausted and only half sane. They had noticed his headlamp moving in a confused way hither and thither. Worried about their friend, they descended back to the foot of the face. They put up a tent and provided him with first aid. Afterward, they returned to the foot of the face and found Markovič's body, which they put into a sleeping bag. At 8 a.m., when we were scheduled to connect by radio, they informed us of the accident.

I found out about the accident when I was almost in the middle of our route at the spot where our gully met the one from the Long Ridge Glacier. Our rope party, as well as the other two rope parties from Pathibara and Nepal Peak, instantly began descending. That day we all arrived at BC. Unanimously we decided to stop our ascents and end the expedition. On November 10, we buried Markovič not far from the place where his body was found, and afterward took down ABC.

On November 15, the last members of the expedition, assistants, and all porters left Pangpema.

ANDREJ ŠTREMFIJ, *Planinska zveza Slovenije*

*Annapurna, North Face, Reconnaissance.* Four expeditions went to the north face of

Annapurna I last spring and encountered constant and sometimes terrible avalanches; all of them abandoned their attempts after climbing no higher than 6750 meters. This autumn the face was again avalanching dangerously. A team of French mountaineers believed they found the solution to this problem: go up the eastern side of the face to the east summit and traverse westward along—or very close to—the ridge that leads to the increasingly higher central and west summits. This, they said, was very safe. But they did not complete the route.

The eight Frenchmen were led by Nicolas Terray, son of the noted alpinist Lionel Terray, who was active in the Nepalese Himalaya in the 1950s-1960s. They arrived at the North Face Base Camp and, after seeing the enormous seracs threatening the face, quickly decided it was much too dangerous. But two members were very interested in attempting a longer line than the original French route of 1950. Christophe Profit and Jean Blanchard liked the idea of staying on the east side of the face, part of which was exposed to avalanching from a peak known as Roc Noir (just east of Annapurna's east-west ridge) only when there was recent heavy snowfall. The French had quite good weather, and this line near the 1974 Spanish route to the east summit attracted them.

Profit and one Sherpa, Dorje, climbed from the team's last fixed camp (6500m) slightly farther east than the Spanish line, and bivouacked on October 27 at 7200 meters. The next day, they intended to go to the east summit and see from there whether it would be feasible to traverse slightly down on the south face. But Dorje's feet had gotten very cold and he could not continue on to the top; they therefore bivouacked at 7400 meters, planning to start their push for the east summit on October 29 at 10 a.m., when the sun would warm Dorje's feet.

However, that night a cyclone blew in from Bangladesh, east of Nepal, forcing them to sleep in their boots. When they left their tent in the morning, the terrible wind blew it away. They descended in this wind to base camp. Meanwhile, on October 25, Blanchard and Frederic Gentet, intending to acclimatize, had climbed closer to the Spanish route to an altitude about the same as Profit's highest point.

During the night of the 29th, the wind stopped blowing, and, Profit commented, this was "the best condition to go to the summit." But when he reached base camp, there was little time left to go again before the departure date of the team, which had been fixed for November 1, and Profit found "no motivation from the members to go again—except me." The people in base camp had taken the decision on the 28th that when he and Dorje Sherpa came back, the climb would be over; they had no desire to change the fixed departure date, and they could not agree to one member's staying longer.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Nilgiri Northeast, South Ridge, Ascent.* On, April 5, the Groupe Militaire de Haute Montagne left for Nepal, returning to the Himalaya after more than five years of polar expeditions. The objective was to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of Maurice Herzog and Louis Lachenall's first ascent of Annapurna.

We linked up by bus from Kathmandu to Pokhara then to Beni, arriving April 11. We managed to get to the 4300-meter Annapurna North Face Base Camp after seven days of trekking and a strike by the Sherpas. Base Camp was established at the foot of a semicircular wall a bit above 3000 meters. It is set on the side of a moraine, and the sound of constantly falling seracs immediately put us in a wary frame of mind. We met up with the best part of our gear, which had been transported up there by helicopter. The first days of acclimatization were devoted to sorting and preparing equipment and the puja. Camp I was quickly set up at the