

direct or turned on the north flank, except at two points. The second of these, which occurred at ca 5800m on the last day, involved turning a vertical tower by 20 meters of down-climbing on a snow ramp to reach the upper gable end, then two long mixed pitches of Scottish 6 to regain the crest. Throughout the whole of this section we came across remarkably little in situ gear; just 15 meters of old rope and only two fixed anchors.

The next two days were spent traversing the horizontal section of the ridge. Initially this was snow and ice, but later there were a large number of gendarmes that gave rock and mixed climbing. It was necessary to make one rappel from a particularly large gendarme, which could not be turned. No fixed gear was found here. This section took us to the start of the upper face, which is defended by a very conspicuous serac barrier.

On the eighth day we made a three-pitch traverse rightward below the serac and then climbed back up to its flat plateau top via an ice pitch in a hidden couloir. The next day we climbed good *névé* runnels, at first trending left, then back right, to join the north ridge about 100 meters below the summit. Throughout this ascent we more or less followed the line of the 1980 Japanese route, which is still festooned with ca 600+ meters of rope and over 30 rock anchors. We camped on the ridge at ca 6700m and the next day, November 10, reached the summit at 9 a.m. In total, our route had involved around 4,000 meters of climbing in generally very settled but cold weather.

JULES CARTWRIGHT, *United Kingdom*

*Pumori, west face, new route.* A five-man expedition comprising four Swiss and one American split into two groups with three of the team attempting the south ridge and the other two, Swiss guides, Ueli Bühler and Ueli Steck, opting for the west face. After a suitable period of acclimatisation Bühler and Steck crossed the rimaye at the bottom of the 1,400-meter face at 2 a.m. on May 6. They adopted a very lightweight approach, taking one 60-meter rope and virtually no bivouac gear, thereby hoping to make a fast ascent. The pair reported that most of the face was 55-60 degrees with some parts as steep as 80 degrees, while there was a section of mixed climbing at M4. They reached the south ridge at ca 6700m and continued to a bivouac at 6800m. Without gear Bühler and Steck were soon driven out of their bivouac by cold. Climbing again at 2 a.m. on the 7th, they moved quickly up the remaining 350 meters until near disaster struck. While moving together up a 45-degree couloir, Steck set off a windslab avalanche that swept the two climbers back down the face. Fortunately, Bühler was able to stop them both and after getting over the shock they continued upward, reaching the summit at 6 a.m., just in time to see the sunrise. They then descended the east ridge. There were no fixed ropes in place as no one that season had climbed above the east col. Below the col, things became easier as they were able to follow marker wands and use ropes placed by a German expedition. They were finally back in their west face base camp (5200m) at 8:30 p.m., having spent 43 hours on the mountain.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

*Pumori, ascent, attempt, and tragedy.* There were two events during the autumn on 7161m Pumori that were noteworthy for entirely different reasons. The good news was the successful ascent by the first Iranian women mountaineers to come on any expedition to the Nepalese Himalaya. The team was led by Zerefeh Rahimzaddeh and comprised 11 members, eight of