

teams, numbering as large as 11 members. They had both employed the heavy-handed tactics of fixed rope and camps. The Anglo-American team acclimatized by climbing the lower one third of the route, loosely following an 18-pitch topo from the Slovenians. We encountered extremely loose rock and decaying in-situ ropes on the dangerous and challenging 600m buttress. We then bivouacked at ca 6,000m for two days and established a well-stocked camp for a forthcoming summit attempt. We then descended to base camp for a four-day rest.

On the successful summit attempt the team climbed alpine style, with two climbers leading all the lower rock buttress free at 5.10X without the use of any fixed rope (although both the rope and anchors were used for descent). After reaching the 6,000m camp, a further nine days were spent on the mountain.

The remaining climbing first involved 900m of committing snow and ice. This was followed by a 250m mixed rock band at 6,800m, which was climbed free at 5.8 and M5. Two days later the summit was reached via exposed knife-edge ridges of poor snow, resulting from extremely high winds. On reaching the top at 12:30 p.m. on November 6, we descended to a snow cave at 7,000m before continuing down for a further two-and-a-half days to base camp. [A lead story on this ascent appears earlier in this Journal.]

JOHN VARCO, AAC

PERI HIMAL

Gyajikang, unsuccessful attempt. An expedition from the Czech Republic led by Karel Plechac attempted this 7,038m peak to the northwest of Manaslu. The first and only recorded ascent of the mountain took place in October 1994 when a large Japanese-Nepalese expedition (joint climbing leaders Osamu Tanabe and Dinesh Chandra Pokhrel) put no less than 17 people on the summit. They fixed ca 1,500m of rope on the northwest spur, which joins the west ridge at 6,600m. The Czech climbers attempted to climb onto the northwest spur via the northeast flank but gave up on October 26 at 5,850m. This was the third attempt on this high peak south of the Himlung Group, the second taking place in the autumn of 2002, when a three-member Dutch-Belgian team reached 6,250m on the north face.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *Nepal*

Himlung, ascent. A Spanish expedition led by Inigo Loyola made the fourth ascent of Himlung (7,126m) in the Peri Himal. The previous three ascents have all been by the straightforward west ridge (Japanese in 1992; French in 2001 and French again in 2002). However, the Spanish report climbing the northwest face, arriving at the summit in two groups on April 18 and 20. The first party comprised Andoni Etxezarreta and Mitxel Insausti, while the second contained the leader with Ramon Iturrikastillo and Juan Jodar. A broad and relatively gently angled spur rises from the northwest to meet the west ridge close to the summit.

In the autumn seven separate permits were issued for this mountain and the west ridge was successfully climbed by six expeditions.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *Nepal*