

be below  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and insufficient acclimatization to this high altitude, the pair finally came to a halt on May 10 at ca 7,450m. Above, the mixed terrain looked hard and icy and the pair decided to retreat, hoping for another attempt later in the month. In the meantime the South Tyrol team had regained their high camp but once again been forced to retreat.

Subsequently, the weather did not allow either group to make another attempt and the Russians, who were the last to leave, finally abandoned their efforts because of too much snow-fall, their exhaustion, and lack of time to get well-rested before resuming the climb.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *Nepal*

*Nuptse East I (7,804m), first ascent.* Last autumn's attempt on the southeast pillar of Nuptse East I was the third by Valeri Babanov of Russia. Babanov had made an unsuccessful solo attempt on this pillar in the autumn of 2002, and in the spring of 2003 returned with Vladimir Suviga as noted above. But he was not willing to give up, and now he knew the route well. This time, at last, Babanov, with Yuri Koshelenko, stood at the pointed summit of Nuptse East I in bright moonlight. They had made one attempt to make their way up the route on October 21 and 22 but only reached 6,900m, before very strong winds forced them to descend. The two Russians resumed climbing the 2,600m buttress on October 29 and in one continuous push, with three bivouacs, they gained the summit on November 3. A lead article on their climb is found earlier in this Journal, along with a chronology of attempts on the route.

Babanov was clearly very pleased to have achieved his goal at last. Not only had the two Russians made the first ascent of the southeast pillar and the first ascent of this 7,804m summit, but Babanov believes they had managed to reach the top of the highest unclimbed peak in the world.

Many of those who are knowledgeable about trends in mountaineering are admirers of Babanov. The equally well-known Slovenian climber, Tomaz Humar, who prefers faces to ridges himself, was quoted in a German Alpine Club magazine three years ago as commenting that, "the future of climbing belongs to the new Russian teams around Valeri Babanov. They practice classical alpinism with little equipment on technically extremely demanding routes.... To me, the future is the lightly-equipped conquest of technically demanding routes at great heights in alpine style." But the admiration is not shared unanimously. One American climber remarked in September, "Babanov uses bolts and I don't like that." Some climbers who made earlier pure alpine-style attempts on the southeast pillar have strongly complained about Babanov's use of fixed ropes.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *Nepal*

*Nuptse, north face, The Crystal Snake.* In terms of high-standard technical ascents at altitude the highlight of the season was the new route on the north face of Nuptse by Argentinean guides, Damian and Willie Benegas.

The brothers made their first sortie onto the face during early May and a second on the 15th of the month, when they climbed 10 hard pitches over good but brittle ice and wonderful orange granite. At 2 a.m. on the 16th the stove broke and the pair had no option other than to rappel, leaving most of their gear at the high point.

The third and final attempt began on the 18th. The first night they bivouacked at 6,500m,