



The summit of Cho Oyu (8,188m) on February 1977, as photographed from Emil Wick's Pilatus Porter. (1) West ridge complete (international team led by Krzysztof Wielicki, 1993; original west ridge by Poles, 1986). (2) Southwest face, Slovenian Route (Kozjek, solo, 2006). (3) Southwest face, Japanese Route (Yamanoi, solo, 2006). (4) Southwest face, Swiss-Polish Route (Kurtyka-Loretan-Troillet, 1990). *Jacques Belge*

to base camp, reaching it after a total of 30 hours. Kozjek's ascent marks the first time that a new route on an 8,000m peak has been soloed in a single push and in a day. His account of this climb, for which he won the People's Choice at this year's Piolet d'Or, appears earlier in the *Journal*

Hungchi, north face. A five-member party led by Toshiya Nakajima made the first ascent of Hungchi (7,038m) from the north in the autumn. The summit was reached by Naoyuki Momose and the leader on November 1. Hungchi, a border peak a little west of Everest, was first climbed in 2003 by a Japanese expedition from the Nepalese side. The same year another Japanese expedition

attempted the mountain from the north, making a long approach from Everest base camp up the Central and Western Rongbuk glaciers. The team climbed the north face to a 6,600m col on the northwest ridge and then continued up the crest, partly on the Nepalese flank, before retreating 200m below the summit (see *AAJ* 2004, p. 426). It is not clear whether the 2006 ascensionists followed this route.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Editor, Japanese Alpine News*

Everest statistics and records in the spring season. The number of teams on Everest during the spring was 94. These ranged in size from one member with no Sherpa helpers to 29 members and 22 Sherpas. Perhaps surprisingly, the number of expeditions was five fewer than the 2005 total of 99, but it was actually larger on the Tibetan side during the spring of 2006, up from 57 to 64. On the Nepalese side there was a big drop, down from 42 to 30.

In terms of number of summiters, there was an even greater difference between the Tibetan and Nepalese sides. A total of 276 people went to the top from Tibet, not counting the possibility that David Sharp summited and died during his descent; his movements above 8,500m are not known. From Nepal only 192 people succeeded.

One explanation for the fall in numbers summiting from the Nepalese side was the worrisome situation created by the 10-year-old armed rebellion of the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) and its increasing use of force throughout the country. In addition, this spring's political unrest spilled onto the streets of Kathmandu and other towns nationwide, organized by conventional parties angered by the King's "autocratic" actions. It took the form of protest marches, public rallies, and general strikes, including bans on motorized travel. The international news media gave increasing attention to all this, and some expeditions canceled their plans to visit Nepal.

As usual, Everest records were set. They included the oldest summiteer and the first double amputee. On May 17 Takao Arayama, a 70-year-old Japanese, became the oldest climber—by three days—to reach the top, having climbed the Tibetan side of the mountain.

The first successful double amputee, 46-year-old New Zealander Mark Inglis, had summited two days earlier, also from the Tibetan side. There have been two single-amputee summiters, each of whom had lost a substantial part of one leg: American Tom Whittaker in 1998 and a Sherpa six years later. Both climbed from the Nepalese side. The first double amputee to try was an American, Ed Hommer, in the autumn of 2001, but when he reached 7,500m, he found the scar tissue on his left stump had cracked open in the dry air and was bleeding slightly. He abandoned the climb.

Twenty-five years ago Inglis had been marooned in a storm for two weeks on New Zealand's highest peak, Mt. Cook, and his badly frostbitten legs had to be amputated at mid-calf. His cleverly engineered artificial legs have the flexibility to enable him to handle technical climbing, but when he was going down the fixed rope early in his attempt on Everest this spring, an anchor pulled, he did a couple of somersaults and found himself sitting in the snow with one leg lying beside him. He got out some duct tape, did a field fix, and descended carefully to advanced base camp. A new leg was brought to him from base camp, and he went back up.

Inglis said he felt "huge satisfaction" at having summited Everest. "If you are a climber, as I have been all my life, the skills are already there. My problem is not going up but coming down. You have to be very careful; there is more wear and tear on the stumps." And indeed he got frostbitten. In his descent to advanced base camp on the day after his success, he was lowered by one his guides on his bottom and two days later reached base camp astride a yak. Back in New Zealand he underwent an operation on his stumps.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, AAC Honorary Member, Nepal

Everest, cross-border traverses. Everest traverses seem to have become the latest fashion, with an unprecedented four successfully completed in the spring season. Three had received permission from both the Chinese and Nepalese authorities; one had not, but managed to get away with it—at a price, literally.

The Italian Simone Moro had no permit to make a traverse. According to him, he had intended to reach the summit from Nepal via the South Col, then descend the Tibetan north face via the Hornbein Couloir, move across to the west ridge and down the Nepalese flank into the Western Cwm, where he had left a camp. But, he claimed, he became lost in the moonless dark and had to follow the fixed ropes down the normal Tibetan route, pulling them out of the snow as he went. An Italian friend, who lives in Lhasa and speaks Chinese and Tibetan, met him in base camp and explained to the authorities, both there and at the nearest police post, how he had innocently gotten lost. The police sold him a pass that allowed him to cross the border into Nepal.

Others who were on the mountain at the same time point out that Moro had taken his passport with him, which is most unusual when climbing from Nepal. They also say there was a tent and an oxygen bottle labeled "MORO" placed by two Italians, Marco Astori and Roberto Piantoni, at 8,100-8,200m on the normal Tibetan route. His friend was already waiting for him at base camp when he arrived, but Moro had no satellite phone, so their meeting must have been pre-arranged. He had to pay \$3,000 for his permit to cross the border.