

Peak Hawley (6,182m). Returning from an ascent of Putha Hiunchuli, where on May 7 all our expedition members reached the 7,246m summit in *progression douce*—snail-style—I escaped to the arêtes of Putha Himal, a long ridge between Putha Hiunchuli and Churen Himal. Leaving our 4,910m base camp at 4:30 p.m. on the 9th, I re-ascended the Chandau Glacier and a long slope on the northwest flank to reach a foresummit at 5,906m. From here, a finely chiselled snow and ice ridge led to the first summit, which I named Aiguille Joséphine (6,156m), before continuing northeast to the main summit, which I named Peak Hawley, in homage to Elizabeth Hawley for her fabulous journalistic work on Nepal Himalaya activity, spanning more than 30 years. I descended northeast, past rocky barriers and ice slopes, to reach base camp via the Kag Glacier, 12 hours after leaving. The traverse, which was comparable with the classic crossing of the Aiguille de Bionnassay in the Mont Blanc massif, merited a Himalayan grade of III/AD. More photographs are on www.paulo-grobel.com.

FRANCOIS DAMILANO, *France*

WEST MUSTANG—MUKUT HIMAL

Kang Kuru (6,344m). On April 16 Ted Hessler and I made the first ascent of Kang Kuru, the second highest summit in a remote group of mountains called the Jakriojagga Lek in West Mustang. We trekked from Jomson via Kagbeni and Shyangmochen to Ghami (on the main route to Lo Manthang). From here we headed west up the Ghami Khola, forking immediately left up the Dhuya Khola. We camped in this valley at 4,000m and again at 5,000m, before striking south up the hillside to put our final camp on a small glacier at 5,300m. Leaving this camp at 4:00 a.m. on the 16th, we climbed south to the crest of the west ridge of Kang Kuru and followed this to the summit. The 45–50° ridge was largely rocky, with some snow cover. The climbing was not difficult, and we reached the summit at 10:30 a.m.

The mountain is set in the middle of a long range of peaks that encompass the Jakriojagga Lek, Thiram Lek, and Khyoktun Himal; the highest point appears to be Pt. 6,390m a little to the west-northwest of Kang Kuru. Above Ghami we saw no other people.

PETE ATHANS, *AAC*

ANNAPURNA HIMAL

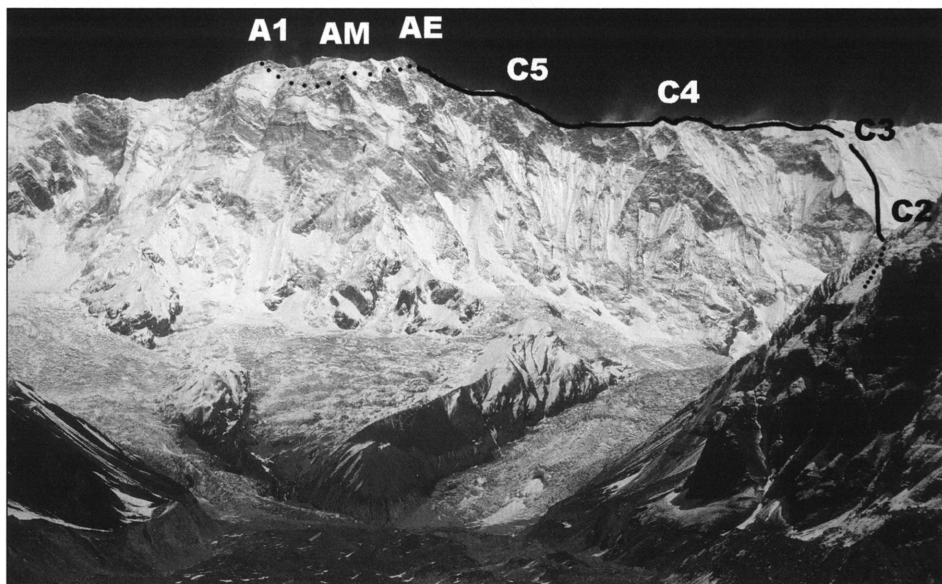
Annapurna I (8,091m), west face, Czechoslovak Route, attempt. Peter Hamor (Slovakia), Piotr Morawski, Piotr Pustelnik, and Dariusz Zaluski (all from Poland) made a spirited attempt on the unrepeatable Czechoslovak Route on the huge west face. Midway between the main summit of Annapurna I and Varah Shikar (the Fang, 7,647m), the southwest ridge of Annapurna rises over a pointed rocky top with an altitude of at least 7,700m. From it a long, pronounced spur descends to the Miristi Khola. It was attempted in 1984 by a primarily French expedition, which reached 7,200m, and a similar line was tried again by French in 1986, reaching 7,900m. In the intervening year Kammerlander and Messner climbed the big depression left of this spur, slanting right toward the top to reach the southwest ridge, and then continuing along the crest to the summit of Annapurna I. This was the first ascent of any route on the west face. The French line was completed in 1988 by a team from Czechoslovakia, which found the upper section of the southwest ridge to be very sharp and technically difficult. In 2008 Hamor, Morawski, Pustelnik, and Zaluski helicoptered to base camp fresh from an acclimatization ascent of Ama Dablam. They progressed quickly up the 1988 line, fixing only 350m of rope in the lower section, and making Camp 3 on April 26 at 6,700m, where they were stuck for three nights in bad

weather. On the 29th they set off in a lightweight push for the summit and bivouacked at 7,800m, just a few meters below the crest of the southwest ridge. Next day they got to 7,950m, only 250m distant from the summit, when fierce winds, snowfall, and lightning forced them down. The team feels that this route should be more widely attempted by aspiring Annapurna summiteers, as it is much less dangerous than the notorious north and south faces.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*

Annapurna I (8,091m), east ridge, tragedy. At the start of spring the famous Spanish mountaineer, 41-year-old Ignacio Ochoa de Olza, known to the climbing world as Iñaki Ochoa, had only Annapurna I and Kangchenjunga left in his campaign to reach the summits of all the 8,000m peaks. He came to the seldom-attempted south face of Annapurna I to climb the long east ridge. His body is still high on mountain, outside the tent at 7,400m, where he died on May 23 despite the efforts of his Romanian teammate Horia Colibasanu, two Swiss climbers, a Kazakhstani, a Russian, and a Canadian.

On May 19 Colibasanu and Ochoa were at 7,850m, near the east summit's north ridge, when Ochoa contracted acute cerebral edema. Colibasanu telephoned down to Swiss climbers Ueli Steck and Simon Anthamatten to ask for help. Three days earlier Steck and Anthamatten had retreated from their first attempt on an unclimbed line up the south face, in heavy snowfall and high wind. The Swiss had no high-altitude equipment at their base but by 9:00 p.m. had packed medicine and started up Ochoa's route on the right side of the south face. Two Sherpas from Ochoa's base camp showed them the start from Camp 1. At 1:00 p.m. on the 20th they reached Ochoa's camp 2 (5,800m), but snow was falling and they were in cloud. The route from



The south face of Annapurna, showing the route on the east ridge climbed by Alexei Bolotov. From just above Camp 5, Bolotov traversed the north flank well below the east and middle summits before ascending to Annapurna I. (A1) Annapurna Main/Annapurna I (8,091m), (AM) Annapurna Middle (8,051m), (AE) Annapurna East (8,026m), (C5) Camp 5 (7,800m), (C4) Camp 4 (7,400m), (C3) Camp 3 (6,800m), and (C2) Camp 2 (5,900m). The Spanish mountaineer, Iñaki Ochoa died at Camp 4. *Lindsay Griffin*