

into the snow to find a layer hard enough to hold our weight. We made a rappel from a buried stuff bag filled with snow; it moved slightly as I descended. A second rappel from an Abalakov got us to a point where we could downclimb a short distance to a flat area above the east couloir. For the first time since starting the route we could take off our harnesses and lie down. The night was cold and windy. Next day we downclimbed and rappelled the east couloir, then walked back to Pheriche, where we arrived at 4 p.m. We climbed the route without tents, bivouac sacks, jumars, or aid, and carried food and fuel for just three days. The 1,500m Direct North Face was VI A15 R.

GENKI NARUMI, *Japan*

*Tibet restrictions, Everest bolting.* Uncertainty about Tibet being open to climbers, indeed to any foreigners, led many to go to the Nepalese side of Everest, rather than wait in the hope of being granted permission to enter Tibet. Would-be Cho Oyu climbers and their expedition organizers switched to Manaslu or Baruntse. March 10 marked the 50th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising against Beijing authorities and shortly afterward the flight of the Dalai Lama across the Himalaya into India. In 2009 the important Buddhist holiday of Lhosar fell in late February, but the Tibetan community in Kathmandu did not hold their usual celebrations, instead mourning Tibetans who suffered during clashes last year.

By February 24 the few foreigners already in Tibet were told to leave, and tour organizers and other tourism operators were instructed not to accept bookings for March; visas valid for travel to Tibet were no longer being issued. By early March, as the *International Herald Tribune* reported, authorities had imposed an unofficial state of martial law on the Tibetan-inhabited highlands, with thousands of troops occupying areas they feared could erupt in riots on the scale of 2008. This was the largest deployment of military since the Sichuan earthquake the previous spring. A curfew was imposed on Lhasa.

The first reports of bolting on the normal Nepal route on Everest surfaced this season. The west face of Lhotse, the gateway to the South Col and final southeast ridge, was very dry during part of the climbing season (although during another period teams were paralyzed by a nearly week-long snowstorm), and some commercial expeditions had come prepared. The leader of a Swiss party brought a drill, which was used by a British assistant leader of a huge expedition and by the American leader of a smaller one. They placed about six bolts in the Yellow Band, at 7,700m on the Lhotse face. [More were added in spring 2010.]

The fitness of many people who sign up with expeditions seems open to question, considering high rates of dropouts and some fatalities. Take this spring's fatalities first: one died of chronic heart disease and one from intracerebral hemorrhage, both climbers surely not in a fit condition to tackle 8,000m summits. Another collapsed from exhaustion after summiting Everest. One disappeared, presumably fell, and five are known to have fallen for unrecorded reasons; some of these falls might have been caused by weariness.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *AAC Honorary Member, Nepal*

*Everest (8,850m), southwest face, Park's Korean Route.* At 3 p.m. on May 20, Jin Jan-chang, Kang Ki-seok, Shin Dong-min, and Park Young-seok stepped onto the summit of Everest, having completed a new route up the southwest face. This is the first new route climbed by Koreans