

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*

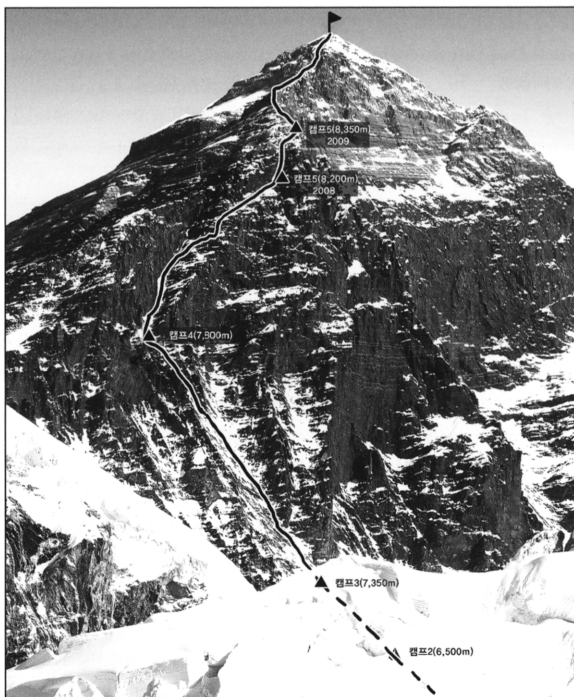
*Everest (8,850m), southwest face, Park's Korean Route.* At 3 p.m. on May 20, Jin Jan-chang, Kang Ki-seok, Shin Dong-min, and Park Young-seok stepped onto the summit of Everest, having completed a new route up the southwest face. This is the first new route climbed by Koreans

on the mountain and their third attempt on this line, which lies left of the 1982 Soviet route.

The six-man Korean team, with eight Sherpas headed by Sirdar Sanggye Puri, left base camp on April 12 to establish Camp 1. On the 18th they established Camp 2 at 6,500m and on the 20th began climbing the left side of the southwest face. From here to Camp 3 (7,350m, dubbed Swallow's Nest) they climbed 28 pitches with an average angle of 50°. At one point their line shared common ground with Korean attempts of 2007 and '08. With less snow cover in 2009, crampons were not needed on 15 of the pitches. The average angle to Camp 4 (7,800m) was 60°. Sixty percent of the fixed rope used on this section had been left in place during the 2008 attempt. At the end of pitch 39 (ca 7,500m), the team collected 11 oxygen bottles deposited in 2007; four were useable.

From Camp 4 the route made a rightward rising traverse across the face, partially in a couloir, to hit the west ridge at 8,350m, where the final camp would later be established. This section was the steepest part of the route, averaging 60° but with steps of 85°. Reaching the ridge involved crossing a huge rock band, which reportedly required 5.9 face-climbing at 8,100m. Sherpas, seeing this, dropped their loads and descended, leaving members to carry extra gear.

At the end of April everyone descended to base camp for a rest; Lee Hyung-mo, who had a chest infection, decided not to return to the face. On May 8, making their first attempt on the summit, Dong-min and two Sherpas left Camp 4 and tried to establish Camp 5; Jan-chang, Ki-seok, and Young-seok left the same day from Camp 2 but were driven back by strong winds. On the next attempt all four Koreans reached 8,350m on May 19 and established Camp 5. This was at the same place as a Soviet camp, and the Koreans discovered old oxygen bottles.



Southwest face of Everest showing Park's Korean Route and camps (2 and 3 are hidden by foreground). The lower of the two C5s is camp used in 2008 attempt. *Park Young-seok Collection*



High on west ridge of Everest during summit day of Park's Korean Route. *Park Young-seok Collection*

On the 20th the four climbers divided 500m of rope between them and packed it in their sacks, which then weighed 20-30kg each. Carrying two or three oxygen bottles, 1½ liters of water, and three gel packets per person, the team climbed toward the summit, fixing a further 400m of rope. Above 8,600m (starting at a point more than 700m distant from the top), they made a new five-pitch variant to the upper west ridge. Fifteen hours after leaving Camp 5, all four reached the top and descended the Normal Route on the southeast ridge.

They named the new line Park's Korean Route. A total of 3,930m of rope was fixed. On new ground, between Camps 2 and 5, they climbed 68 pitches; from Camp 5 to the summit, 30 pitches.

In 1991 Park Young-seok attempted the southwest face by the 1975 British route. While he was leading at 7,000m, the Sherpa who was belaying him pulled the rope, causing Park to fall 150m. He had to drop out of the expedition, which later reached a high point of 8,350m. Park returned to attempt the new line, left of the 1982 Soviet Route, in the spring of 2007 and autumn of 2008. In 2007 his 10-man team, including two Sherpas, fixed rope to 8,000m. The day after he reached this high point, Lee Hyun-jo and Oh Hee-jun moved up to Camp 4 at 7,700m. While they were inside the tent, the first big avalanche to occur on the face during the expedition struck them, sweeping both climbers to their deaths. Lee and Oh were young and outstanding Korean mountaineers. In 2008 the Koreans placed Camp 5 at 8,200m, close to the west ridge, but were stopped from reaching the summit by severe winds.

CHRISTINE PAE, *Korean Alpine News*, WITH ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FROM ELIZABETH HAWLEY,  
AAC Honorary Member, Nepal

*Melanphulan (6,573m), north face (not to summit).* Marcin Michalek, Krzysztof Starek, and I arrived in the Khumbu hoping to climb the north face of Melanphulan, above the Nare Valley. During our first two weeks we acclimatized by trekking from base camp in the village of Pangboche (3,900m) to the foot of the face, where we established an advanced base at 5,100m, and then made two trips to Lobuje East. On the first we reached the so-called False Summit (ca 6,000m, PD). On the second Michalek and I continued on the exposed east ridge to the rarely visited Main Summit (6,119m, D+). This ridge, between the two summits, took 4½ hours and was risky due to dangerous cornices. We then rested five days at base camp before climbing Melanphulan's north face in a round trip of five days from advanced base.



North face of Melanphulan with line of Polish ascent to northeast ridge, 100m from summit. The only previously recorded ascent of the peak, in 2000 by Supy Bullard and Peter Carse, climbed west face on right direct to summit. *Wojtek Kozub*

On October 30 we moved together up the first 300m of the face and cut a small tent platform on a narrow snow flute toward the right side of the wall. Our idea was to continue