

South-east of the Vega Redonda are the principal summits: Torre (or Peña) Santa Maria de Enol (2478m) and Peña Santa de Castilla (2596m). The former was ascended both years, once from the N via a steep névé and the second time from the SW up very broken rock demanding great care. However, it has excellent technical routes on sound rock. The Peña Santa requires a longer approach march across the Jou Santu—about 3½ hours to the foot of the N face Narrow Gully (normal route, entry pitch of III +, the rest II or II +); it is a splendid mountain with some outstanding climbs of 600m on its S side.

During our 2 tours of the Picos we were able to undertake an extensive exploration of the area and to climb many of the major summits and several minor ones but, even so, we sampled only some of the innumerable climbs and traverses that can be done. Excellent rock climbing is to be had mostly on sound, rough limestone; and there are hundreds of routes to choose from—routes of 180m to 1000m, including serious mixed climbs and artificial routes. But, because of the nature of the terrain, the relative difficulties of access and the remoteness of the mountains from centres of habitation, careful planning is necessary in order to achieve the most from the time at one's disposal.

Maps: many, scales 1:25.000 and 1:50.000

Guides: (General) J. R. Lueje '*Los Picos de Europa*' 3rd edn. 1977.

(Climbing) J. López and M. A. Adrados '*Los Picos de Europa*' 1980.

A guidebook in English is in preparation.

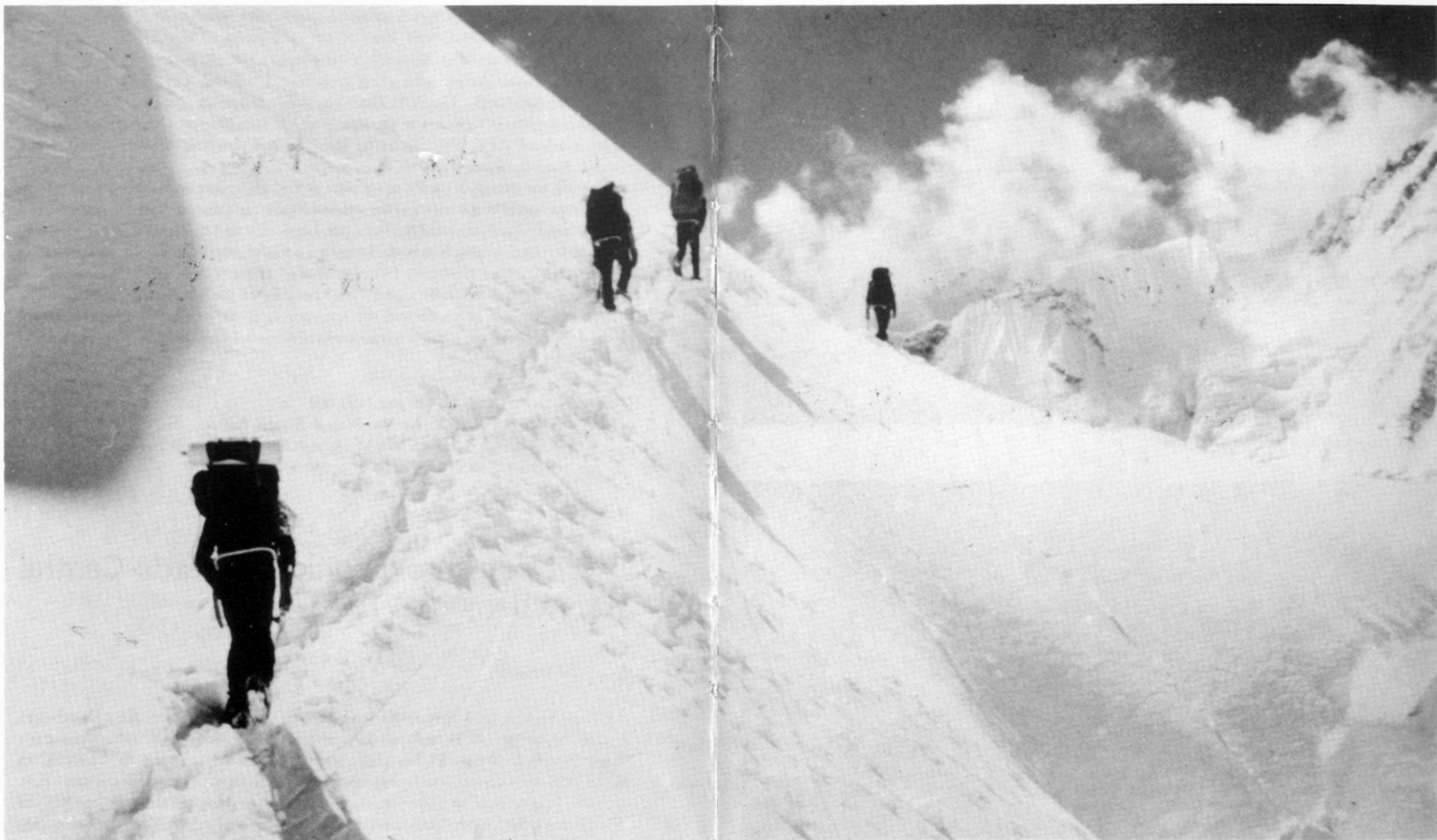
The Spanish expedition towards Central Kangchenjunga 1978

Joaquim Prunés

Midway through 1975 a group of friends in the Terrassa Mountaineering Club began preparing for the '78 Himalayan Expedition. The objective was Yalung Kang (or Kangchenjunga West), 8438m high, one of the highest summits on the earth. In April 1977 we received permission from the Government of Nepal, at the same time as our expedition project was approved by the Spanish Federation of Mountaineering. After making many calculations, we came to the conclusion that the most economic way of carrying the almost 6000kg of equipment was by means of two trucks which at the same time would afford the members of the expedition transport there.

On 15 February, 7 members of our expedition left Terrassa with all the baggage. It took 25 days to cross Europe and half of Asia to reach Nepal. At the border of that country, we met up with the other members who had gone by plane to Kathmandu. Quickly we got to Daran Bazar, the village which was the point of departure for the approach march. We delayed 3 days in order to hire the 235 porters that would accompany us, and on 16 March we left Daran Bazar.

The proposed route, one of the longest trails in the Himalayas, presented 2 serious obstacles which made it even longer. One was the presence of a Polish expedition,

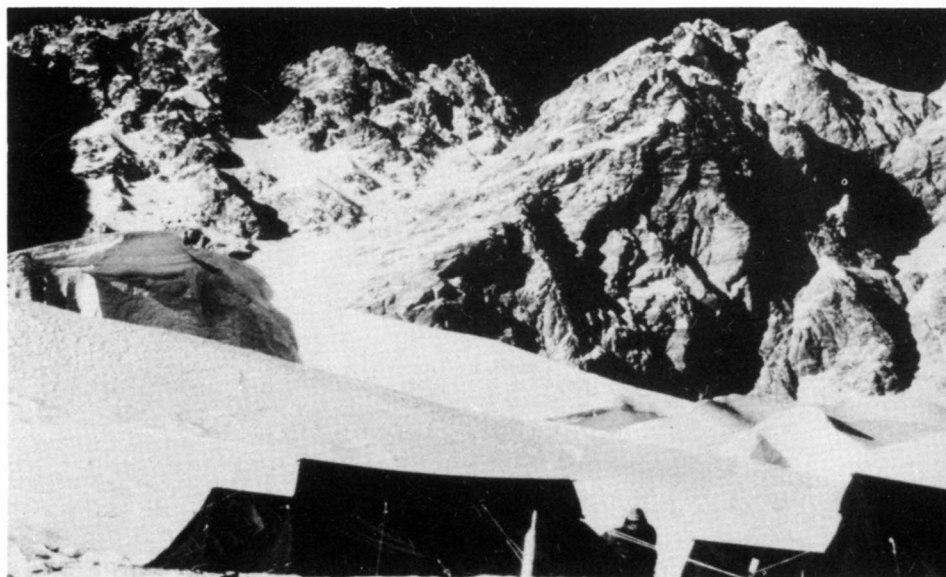


84 *Between Camps 1 and 2 (This and next 2 photos: Spanish Kangchenjunga expedition)*

also headed for Kangchenjunga, (financially stronger than us, they took away our porters on repeated occasions); the other was the bad weather and surfeit of snow in the last stages. These circumstances combined forced both us and the Sherpas to be our own porters.

On 20 April we finally arrived at the Base Camp. This was at 5200m above the perpetual snow level of Yalung. All around, a great circle of mountains: Jannu (7710m); Kangbachen (7904m); Yalung Kang (8438m); the three Kangchenjunga (Main, Central and South); Talung (7412m).

We set to work straightaway on the settlement of the itinerary and the high altitude Camps in order to make up for the serious setback we were suffering. Thus, on 23 April we pitched Camp 1 at 6100m; on 27 April Camp 2, at 6550m and Camp 3 at some 7150m on 5 May. On 11 May, an attempt was made to pitch Camp 4 at the base of the narrow passage which leads to Yalung Kang. At about 7600m, however, we found the pass barred by some large crevasses. We also noticed that the snow in the pass made for bad conditions and avalanches of ice and rock were coming down. What with these adverse conditions, and having seen that the pass between



85 *Kangchenjunga main and central peaks*



86 *Jannu from 8250m on Kangchenjunga*

Kangchenjunga Central and Main offered a possibility, we decided to attempt an ascent by this rear way. On the 15 May, we pitched a light Camp 4 (just one tent) at a height of almost 7800m at the base of the couloir. Two days later, 3 Sherpas and 3 members of the team prepared this Camp with everything necessary for making an attempt the following day. Thus on the 18th at about 6.30am, Narcis Serrat, Francesc M. Troya and the Sherpa Phuri set off for the summit. Progress was very slow and tiring since they kept sinking into the snow up to their knees, and also on account of the weight of the oxygen tanks (about 13kg).

At 2.00pm towards 8200m, the lack of oxygen forced one of them to abandon the ascent. It was Troya, who undertook a rapid descent. The other two carried on via some channels of rock and ice and later via a ridge. At 4.30pm they arrived at the point they had aimed for; from there they could see clearly the other points which form the Kangsang Central Peak. The height according to the altimeter was 8410m. The wind, cold, fatigue, late hour and lack of oxygen compelled them to descend rapidly. Close on 8.00pm, already well after dark, they arrived at Camp 3 where various companions, amongst them a doctor, were waiting.

During the return trek we had a new lot of problems owing to lack of porters, many of them now busy with work in the fields. We had to abandon some 20 loads.

On 13 June we arrived in Kathmandu and, the final negotiations completed, we set out for home on the 15th. Finally, after a very fatiguing voyage, we arrived back at Terrassa on 5 July.

The British Kishtwar Himalaya expedition 1979

Anthony Wheaton

This expedition, consisting of Anthony Wheaton, Richard Hester, Hugh Thornbery, Don Mabbs, Chris Parkin and Peter Blackburn, set out to climb Brammah's Wife (5478m) and Eiger (5513m) by alpine style techniques without using fixed ropes or camps on the mountain. Our arrival in late August at base camp in the Nanth Nullar beside the Brammah glacier at 3600m coincided with the deterioration of the weather; decreasing temperatures and daily storms dominated and restricted our climbing.

We planned to climb Brammah's Wife by a ridge on the W side of the icefall up to the W col, whence a steep but continuous snow slope led to the top. Thornbery and Mabbs made the first attempt, but the ridge was blocked by a subsidiary hanging glacier, previously hidden by the bad weather. This, coupled with further route finding difficulties, caused them to retreat on the second day after Mabbs had mild frostbite in his toes.