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# Nepal 1988

(Plate 107)

## Mount Everest (8848m)

The Sherpa who reached the summit of Everest on 22 December 1987 (see A/J93, 246, 1988/89) was Ang Rita. It was the fourth time Ang Rita had climbed Everest, and the third time without oxygen; at the time of his winter ascent, he was 48 years old.

The most significant ascent of the year was the 35th anniversary ascent by a small international team comprising Rob Anderson (leader, USA), Ed Webster (USA), Paul Teare (Canada), and Stephen Venables (UK). For a full account see the first article in this volume.

The least significant ought to have been the ridiculous international 'live television' effort. China, Nepal and Japan collaborated to put together a climbing team of 270 and a film crew of 35. They spent no less than £7 million. This sort of circus is not only unnecessary, but also environmentally extremely damaging. In the Himalaya, enough is already too much.

Two other British expeditions were active on Everest and are reported earlier in this volume.

Marc Batard followed up his solo of Makalu with a 22½-hour climb of Everest. He reached the summit on 26 September, via the South Col route. Eight other climbers reached the top the same day, including Marc Boivin (France) who parapented from the summit. Boivin was helped by two Sherpas, one to carry his 'chute and one to carry his skis. Unfortunately, these efforts were marred by yet another television extravaganza. The French had a media-dominated operation, with a budget of FF 32 million, 300 Sherpas, 6000 litres of fuel, 150 tents etc. How much money did the European sponsors allow for the environmental repairs?

## Ngojumba Kang (7743m)

Yu Kwang Yeul and Chol Mi Ho made the first winter ascent via the S face on 11 February. The team had permission to traverse the connecting ridge to Cho Oyu, but gave up in bad weather.

## Langtang Lirung (7234m)

On 3 January Kazimierz Kiszka and Adam Potoczek (Poland) made the first winter ascent via the Japanese SE ridge route.

## Cho Oyu (8201m)

Pre-monsoon, six expeditions followed the Tichy (1953) route, or variations of it. Dave Walsh reached the summit alone on 30 April, the first British ascent of this peak (see the article in this volume). The other nations represented included

Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Holland. Stefan Woerner from the Swiss/German expedition began to suffer from AMS during the descent and, after spending the night at a camp at 7300m, he was unable to move the next day and died there during a spell of poor weather. Woerner was an experienced and popular figure on the Himalayan scene, with several 8000m peaks to his credit.

The French sent a large expedition to Cho Oyu during the post-monsoon season. They used Sherpas up to Camp 2. On 12 September six climbers reached the top, but only one walked down. Two summiteers ski'd down, one mono-ski'd, one surfed, and one parapented to Base Camp in 15 minutes. There have been four flights from 8000m peaks to date (January 1989); they are:

1985 Gevaux (France) from Gasherbrum 1;

1987 Japanese from Cho Oyu;

1988 Cormier (France) from Cho Oyu;

1988 Boivin (France) from Everest.

Cormier's flight was the only one not to use 'helpers' to get the canopy into the air.

The 2000m N face of Cho Oyu received its first ascent by an eight-man team from Yugoslavia; they established four camps on the face. On 2 November Dr Iztok Tomazin made a solo ascent from Camp 3 (Camp 4 was not established until the next day) and descended the Tichy route. Six more members reached the summit during the following days and descended by the route of ascent. This was an almost unknown face of the mountain, and the Yugoslavs had no prior knowledge of it.

### **Makalu (8463m)**

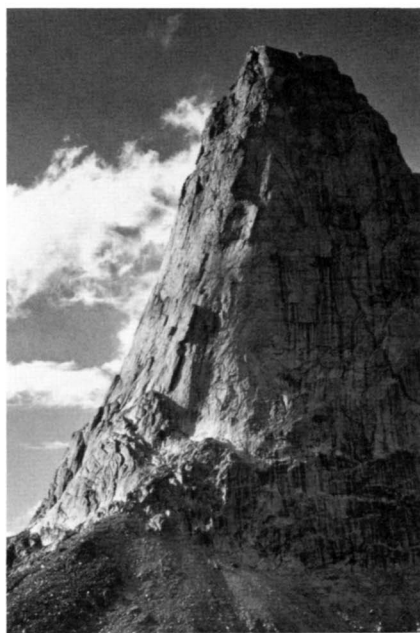
Marc Batard made a controversial first solo ascent and first traverse of the mountain via the difficult W pillar, descending the normal NW face/ridge. In this remarkable effort Batard claimed a 'solo' even though he used Nepalese help to carry ropes to the bottom of the pillar, which he then fixed for 2000m before making his summit push on 26 April. During the descent he had the assistance of German and Italian route markers.

Doug Scott's expedition reached their high point when Rick Allen and Alan Hinkes climbed to 8100m, where Allen was carried away by a compact 'wind-slab' and fell some 400m over mixed ground. Hinkes was unbelayed, and unclipped the rope as Allen went by. Hinkes affirms that this action saved both their lives, as he was then in a position to climb down to the concussed and injured Allen, bringing him down to the Makalu La (7410m) where a Catalan team completed the rescue operation.

A Polish expedition led by Ms Anna Czerwinska followed the NW face/N ridge route and, on 14 October, placed two members on the summit, one of whom, Ryszard Kolakowski, failed to return. On the way to the summit the pair passed Carlos Carsolio who was having difficulty descending. It appears that they refused to help Carsolio, who would have perished had not the above-mentioned Catalan team sacrificed their summit chances to bring him down safely.



105. *Karakoram: Gasherbrum 1.* (p 253)



106. *Karakoram: The Ogre's Thumb.* (p 253)



107. *The North Face of Cho Oyu.* (p 262)



108. *SE face of Pk 6292m on the S shoulder of Mana (7272m).* (p 267)

### **Chamlang (7319m)**

A team of Dutch women led by Frederike Bloemers ascended the E peak via the N face/NE ridge. The summit was reached on 10 May by four members, followed by two more the following day.

### **Kangchenjunga (8586m)**

A South Korean expedition led by Jung Sang Moo made an ascent of the SW face, reaching the summit on 2 January.

On 3 May, Peter Habeler (Austria), Carlos Buhler (USA) and Martin Zabelata (Spain) completed an alpine-style ascent of the N ridge, starting up the Messner route and finishing up the British route.

### **Manaslu (8163m)**

On 1 May, a Swiss team reached the summit via the E ridge/NE face with three members, including the first Swiss woman to climb an 8000m peak (Ursula Huber).

### **Annapurna 1**

On 10 May the Quota 8000 team, now renamed *Esprit d'Equipe*, completed an ascent of the S face via the British route. The team used fixed ropes but no oxygen.

In October Jerzy Kukuczka and Artur Hazjer (Poland) completed a new route on the S face. They were members of an international expedition with 11 climbers. The Ecuadorian Ramiro Navarrete reached the summit via the E ridge, but disappeared during the descent.

*Józef Nyka adds:*

### **Lhotse and Everest – Success and Tragedy**

A Slovak-New Zealand Khumbu expedition 1988 had two objectives: to climb Lhotse by its normal route and Mount Everest by the still unrepeated British route on the SW face. The Slovak team was composed of Ivan Fiala (leader), Dušan Becík, Peter Božík, Jaroslav Jaško, Jozef Just, Jaroslav Oršula and Dr Milan Skladaný. They used the South Korean and French routes via the ice-fall and then established three camps and fixed ropes towards the South Col. After a period of bad weather the Slovaks left Base Camp on 21 September. On 27 September Becík and Just set out from Camp 3 (7250m) and after seven hours reached 8050m, where they bivouacked for four hours. Next morning the pair climbed for eight hours by moonlight, and at daybreak (6am) they reached the summit of Lhotse (8501m, according to the new American map). The ascent was completed without supplementary oxygen.

Now they turned to the Everest SW face, planning an alpine-style attack, including descent to the S Col. The first attempt was made on 7 October but

failed at Camp 2 (6400m) because of bad weather. On 12 October Becík, Božík, Just and Jaško left Base Camp and reached Camp 2 again. Next day strong wind prevented the climb. On 14 October they started up the British route at 3am, making good progress and reaching 8100m at 6pm. On 15 October they had a nasty surprise: they took a whole day for the Rock Band Chimney, which was much more difficult than they had expected. The next night they spent above the Rock Band at 8400m. On 16 October the long rising snow traverse to the right was completed. Becík lost his strength and progress was slow. The last bivvy was beneath the South Summit at 8600m. The team was exhausted by the effort, and on 17 October Just went to the summit solo and reached it at 1.40pm. The other members separated and began the descent towards the South Col. At 4pm Just reported that he had joined Becík and Jaško, who 'is lethargic and does not want to descend'. At 5.30pm Just told Base Camp that they were all together but still at some 8300m. Although they felt bad, showing symptoms of high altitude sickness, they continued the descent. This was the last radio contact. The three-member American team (plus two Sherpas) watched the slope from the South Col, but unfortunately saw nobody. Visibility had been good, but the wind became stronger and stronger. At 11pm a storm of 120–150km/h set in, destroying four tents in Camp 2. The following day radio contact with the South Col at 10am brought bad news: the Slovak team had not reached the camp and had not been seen on the descent. In view of the exhaustion of the four and the terrible conditions during the night, there was no hope that they were still alive. On 19 October the last teams left Camp 2 and on 21 October the expedition began the walk down.

The speed ascent of Lhotse and the alpine-style conquest of the Everest SW face were splendid successes, unfortunately with a tragic epilogue: four men died, three of them being experienced Himalayan climbers with two eight-thousanders each. Their dramatic climb shows once again that oxygenless assaults on the five highest mountains of the world have their limits, demarcated by factors such as the height, the time of the operation, the difficulty of route-finding and, of course, the ability of the team. One extra unfavourable factor not included in the reckoning, and the enterprise changes into a catastrophe.

### SW Buttress of Dhaulagiri, Alpine-Style

A Czechoslovak-Italian-Soviet expedition led by Peter Schnabl and Jiří Novak (climbing leader) hoped to make new routes on Annapurna and Dhaulagiri. One of its objectives was the first complete ascent of the SW buttress of Dhaulagiri (8167m), attempted in 1978 and 1980 by a French party (up to 7500m) and in 1985 by a Czechoslovak team (to 7250m). The buttress is 2200m high, and the snow-slopes above it 900m. The French reported great difficulties in three sections: from 5000 to 6000m a succession of rock towers; between 6000 and 6800m a fine snow ridge with steps up to 60° and enormous rock-and-ice towers; from 6800 to 7300m a vertical and partially overhanging step which is the crux section (on 400 vertical metres difficulties of VI–VI+, A2).

The ascent was completed by Zoltán Demján (33) from Bratislava, Juri

Moiseev (34) and Kazbek Valiev (36) from Alma Ata. Demján had climbed Everest and Lhotse Shar in 1984, Valiev had reached Everest by a new route, Moiseev had taken part in hard winter climbs in the Pamir (Pik Lenina, 1988).

Base Camp (3600m) was established on 16 September. The Advanced Base (5100m) of the trio was on the SW Col. They left Base Camp on 27 September, equipped for eight to ten days. They were lucky to have unusually good weather all the time. Because of climbing difficulties the team moved slowly, some 400m a day, carrying food, fuel and gear. The last bivvy was at 7350m, and they reached the top late in the evening on 6 October. The descent was by the same route and took four further days.

This 14-day climb was carried out by a strong team in pure alpine style, without camps, fixed ropes and other route protection. In view of the length and height of the route, its difficulty and the modern style of the climb, this ascent is undoubtedly the best accomplishment of the Himalayan year 1988.