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Alpinist Associations

1932 - 1982

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and the 50th Anniversary of the UIAA**

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Conservation of Himalayan Environment  
&**

**Problems related to Mountaineering Expeditions**



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## MESSAGE FROM His MAJESTY

# KING BIRENDRA BIR BIKRAM SHAH DEV

I am happy to hear that the International Union of Alpinist Associations is convening its 44th General Assembly in Kathmandu. I am told that the occasion also marks its 50th anniversary which for the first time is being held in Asia. One would deem the event as a recognition of the Nepal Himalayas to be one of the centres of world mountaineering.

The Himalayas has always been held sacred by the Nepalese people. It has been the abode of gods and has lured men for peace and meditation through the ages. It has also nestled one of the richest regions of flora and fauna. As a cradle of our culture it has given the Nepalese a disposition towards fortitude and courage in the face of difficulties. To our simple farmers it has proved to be a source of sustenance, as to us all its waters have remained the chief spring of development. No wonder that people in general should look upon the Himalayas with reverence finding in these mountains the crowning glory of Creation itself.

Nepal's policy has been one of friendship with all countries, a fact epitomised by her desire to remain a Zone of Peace. It is in this spirit of peace that she has opened her mountains to climbers from countries throughout the world. It is, however, important that alpinists, while climbing our mountains, maintain the sanctity and peace as Nature ordained them. It is a responsibility not only towards ourselves, but also to the posterity that will seek inspiration from them the same way we do and have been doing through the ages.

I wish the Kathmandu meeting to be a memorable occasion for all.

Thank you.



## MESSAGE FROM RT. HON. PRIME MINISTER

# SURYA BAHADUR THAPA

I am happy to learn that the Nepal Mountaineering Association is bringing out a Souvenir on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the International Union of Alpinist Associations and its 44th General Assembly which is being convened in Nepal this year.

The choice of the venue is only logical because Nepal's Himalayas attract so many climbers from all over the world.

I wish the conference a success and hope that your deliberations will help further promote alpine sports and develop mountain tourism in Nepal.

A handwritten signature in Nepali script, which reads "Surya Bahadur Thapa". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Surya Bahadur Thapa  
Prime Minister



## MESSAGE FROM

# KUMAR KHADGA BICKRAM SHAH

I am pleased to state that the Nepal Mountaineering Association has been provided the privilege of hosting the 44th. General Assembly of the International Union of Alpinist Associations, in accordance with the decision taken by the UIAA in its last meeting at Lugano. This year also happens to be the 50th. anniversary of the UIAA that was founded in 1932 at Chamonix, and we are commemorating this occasion in the land of Sagarmatha. We take this as a unique honour which, I feel, is a testimony to the importance of the Nepalese Himalaya in alpine circles.

In comparison to climbing exploits in the European Alps, the Rockies, and even the Andes, the Himalaya came late in the mountaineering scene. It was in the second decade of the present century that Karkoram, Western Himalaya, Sikkim Himalaya and Mount Everest from the Tibetan side attracted a steady flow of adventurous spirit. The grandeur of the Nepalese peaks were things to be seen and envied from afar until 1949. This last frontier of great heights, including eight of the world's fourteen highest peaks, soon beckoned the indomitable spirit of man. Sagarmatha, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse, Cho Oyu, Makalu, Dhaulagiri, Manasalu and Annapurna were climbed in the first ten years of Nepal opening her doors to share with other countries the heritage which nature has so bountifully endowed on us. Since then, there has been an increasing number of climbers in the country from all over the world. I hope we can leave to posterity the same sense of joy and fulfillment that no doubt mountaineers must have experienced in the Himalaya for half a century.

His Majesty's Government of Nepal has done much to encourage this noble sport. It was in order to give opportunity to more expeditions that multiple routes on the same peak were allowed in one season. Similarly, the addition of the winter climbing season to the already existing spring and autumn seasons was made to meet the demand of more expeditions. Thus, it is befitting that the UIAA has decided to celebrate its golden jubilee in this land of noble peaks and active mountaineering. We will do our utmost within our resources and capacity to make this event a memorable one. My confidence rests on the traditional hospitality of the Nepalese people.

As the UIAA steps into the second half-century, I hope it will be the beginning of a new era in international mountaineering activities.

Welcome!

Willkommen!

Bienvenue !

Kumar Khadga Bickram Shah  
President-Nepal Mountaineering Association



## MESSAGE FROM

# Prof. MICHIO YUASA

I am glad to note that the International Union of Alpinist Associations, is holding its 44th General Assembly for the first time in Asia in Kathmandu through the efforts of the Nepal Mountaineering Association. It is also highly significant that it is celebrating its Golden Anniversary there. The theme 'Conservation of the Himalayan Environment' is indeed topical and is the need of the hour.

As you know, presently the European countries, the United States of America and Japan are facing serious problems caused by destruction of the environment due to their priority on economic and technical development. Right now we in Japan are in the midst of a "Renaissance of Green" campaign. The reason that the Himalaya still attract a large number of tourists is not only because of the thrill of climbing some of the highest peaks in the world but also for its still bountiful nature, which are not found in the west anymore because of environmental damage. So the exodus of tourists to the Himalaya will continue as long as these last. But sad to say there have been a lot of changes since the last ten to fifteen years in the Kathmandu valley, Namche Bazar and Khumbu areas. The green belt is creeping higher and higher and the amount of garbage left by expeditions has to be seen to be believed. These have been primarily responsible for spoiling the natural beauties. If you now compare the Everest region where a lot of trekkers and expeditions pass through and the Rolwaling valley where the movement of tourists is very limited the difference is striking. The Everest region is scarred while the Rolwaling valley still retains its natural grandeur. Destruction and pollution of the natural environment will have a negative impact on tourists.

It is high time that the various expeditions and trekkers learn to respect the natural surroundings. The priority now is that an organisation composed of social and natural scientists be set up as a sort of watchdog committee to monitor and regulate the use of the natural environment and to plan its upkeep. Otherwise, in the near future the destruction will be total. So, we lovers of scenic grandeur and the environment should club together and try for preservation of one of the last frontiers of the unspoiled and unpolluted regions of the world.

Prof. Michio Yuasa  
Japan Alpine Club

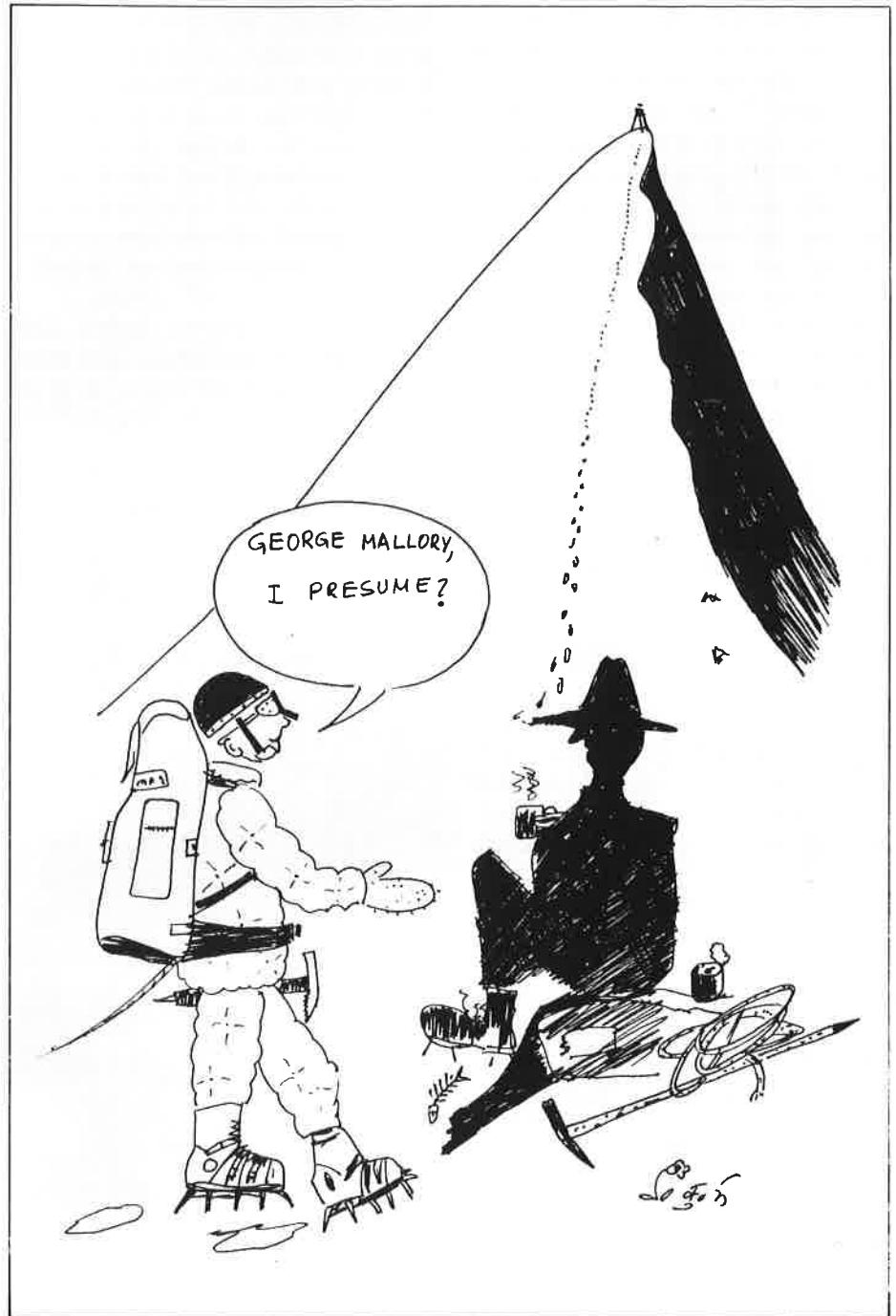
# THE CELESTIAL OMNIBUS

A FANTASY BY JIMMY ROBERTS

I was not really an Everest climber at all, but I had done some scrambling in the Lake District, and everyone seemed to be climbing the mountain. So I answered the advert of the Instant Everest Agency, and now here I was on the top, feeling remarkably fit and acclimatised.

The American working for the Agency in Kathmandu had explained, "We'll send you by bus to Jiri and you'll walk to base from there. That's for training. We now have some new Chinese altitude drugs. During the trek you will be given a course of injections and pills which will render you more or less immune to the effects of altitude, and also considerably increase your powers of endurance and resistance to cold." "But," he warned, "the laws of gravity still apply. Our guarantee does not include floatability. Slip while you are unroped and you'll go the same way as Mallory and Irvine. Good luck!"

I had already proved him right in all respects. Owing to unforgiveable negligence on the part of the Agency Sardar I had fallen into a crevasse on the South Col. But I had spent a warm and comfortable night down there, and when they rescued me next morning, I had only a few bruises to show for the experience. Now, on the summit, I had but two thoughts in my mind, to savour and enjoy the unique sensation of standing on the top of the world on a fine morning, and a great desire to get away from my 21 companions. I resolved to leave them, and descend later. They might miss me, but they hadn't done so the night I spent in the crevasse. I had no fears now of the effects of spending a night out, and as for my proven lack of floatability, I'd take my chance. I had recently lost the thing I loved most,



and while I was not in a suicidal state of mind, I was genuinely indifferent whether my Everest expedition ended with a beer in the Malla bar, or in a hole in the Kangshung glacier.

Scrambling, now, down from the summit on the Tibetan side, I was surprised to find a man sitting on a rock about 50 meters from the top.

"Have a sardine," he said "They're good." "Chinese," he added.

I accepted and then sat down on a nearby rock to open my own packed lunch. All the time I had been surreptitiously scrutinizing my new friend. He was slim and good looking, definitely not another errant member of my own group, clean shaven brown face, nice teeth and friendly eyes: age, under forty. He was dressed in an old, rather frayed tweed suit, and glancing down I saw his boots were nailed, yes nailed with those shiny knobs called 'clinkers', which I had seen before only in pictures in the old climbing books.

My mind began to race. Feeling rather stupid, I heard myself saying, "George Mallory, I presume?"

"Why yes," he said. "Glad to meet you."

"George," I blurted out. "How long have you been up here?"

"Mister Mallory," he gently rebuked my familiarity, and continued, "Well, when Sandy and I reached the top we found an old man ———."

"You reached the summit in twenty four?" I interrupted excitedly.

"Of course we did," Mallory replied rather irritably. "And as I was saying, there was an old man. I had never felt so happy in my life, the sun was shining and the sky was blue, with fluffy white clouds sailing past. It was like the heaven I had imagined as a child. I just wanted to stay there for ever, and the old man said it could be arranged. Sandy, however, wasn't so keen on the idea. On the way to base he had become interested in Buddhism and he now chose to stay instead at the Rongbuk monastery, and we agreed to meet down there from time to time."

"What about 1952?" I asked. "How did you feel when they climbed it — I mean climbed it for a second time?"

"Well, I was a bit surprised at all the fuss and excitement. And although I had never given the matter a thought before, it suddenly seemed it would be rather fun to be famous, become Sir George Mallory, and all that. So I went down to Rongbuk to discuss the development with Sandy. The old man said he could arrange for us to go back. But in the end, we decided not to. Good people were being feted, and we had no wish to break their halos. And in any case it seemed dishonest now to claim rewards for which we had not climbed."

"Do much climbing?" I asked.

"Lord, yes," Mallory replied. "All the routes, up and down, and some new lines as well. Of course its good



fun, but I also do it for the food. I know I am different in some ways," he smiled, "but I still enjoy a square meal. Things are easier now, with parties on both sides of the mountain, but some of the expedition food is pretty lousy."

"Do you talk to many people?"

"In the old days, to Frank and Eric and others, quite often. But now, and I don't think I am a snob really, I find I have little in common with most of the climbers. But I did have a word with Tom and Willi, and later with Ang Phu and Pertemba."

It was all fascinating — many mysteries were being explained. I remembered how Frank Smythe, climbing alone, had broken a bar of chocolate carefully in two, and kept half for an invisible companion. I wanted to ask Mallory if he had followed Rheinhold Messner during his solo climb, but just then we heard the unmistakable sounds of another party reaching the summit.

The discordant strains of "On Ilkley Moor" sung by elderly female voices were wafted down on the wind to where we sat.

"Who on earth is that?" asked Mallory.

"Yorkshire Housewives' Over Sixty Alpine Club," I announced with pride. "First ascent in nylon bikinis and rubber sneakers."

The girls, as we had affectionately known them in base camp, had evidently made the summit despite the gloomy prognostications of Reuter's correspondent down in Kathmandu. However, Mallory, far from sharing my nationalistic enthusiasm, became suddenly extremely agitated.

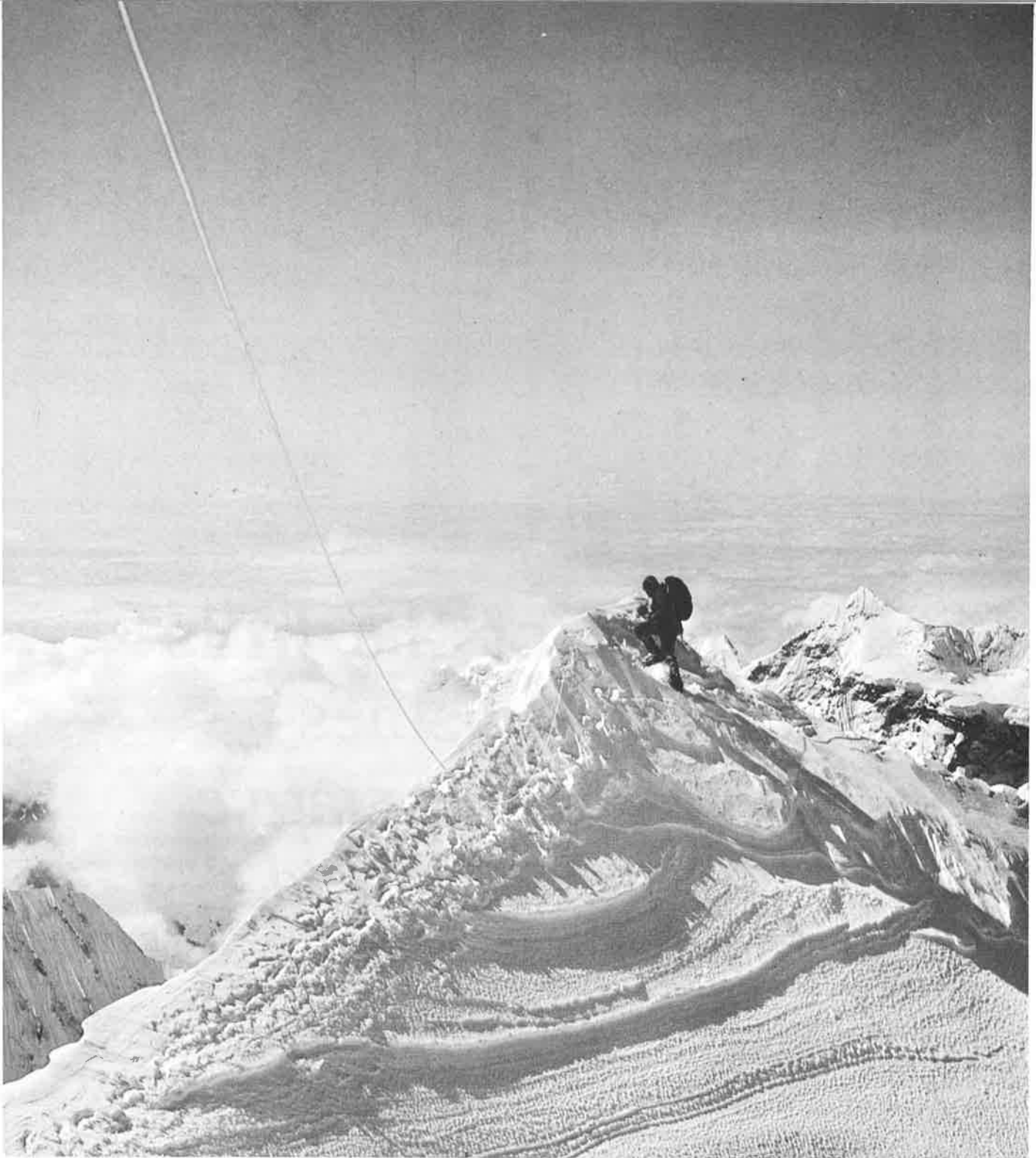
"Lord," he said, "I'm going down to join Sandy."

He swung a battered rucksack onto his back, and began to run down into Tibet.

"Good bye, George," I called after him.

He turned for a moment, and I thought he was going to correct my familiarity, but instead he smiled, waved, and he was gone.





He just seemed to disappear. I scrambled to a point from which I could look down the ridge, but there was no one to be seen.

I thought I may have dreamt it all. But there on the rock was the freshly opened, half empty tin of Chinese sardines. I took one, and climbed slowly back to the summit to join the Yorkshire ladies for the descent.

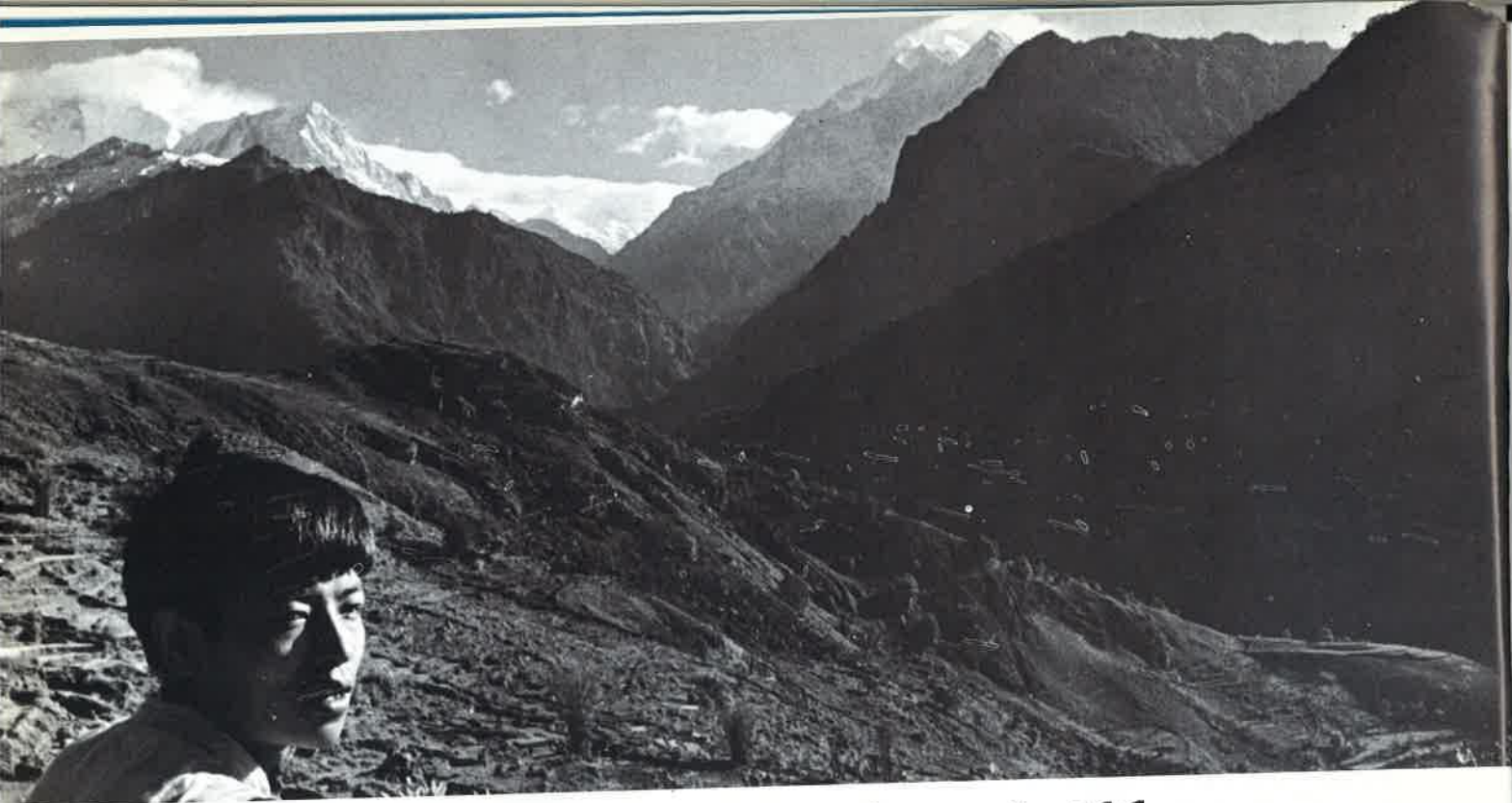
#### Postscript

News items from *Rising Nepal*, Kathmandu. Dateline not known.

A bus belonging to the Instant Everest Agency of Kathmandu carrying 22 British tourists left the road and fell into the Bhote Kosi River beyond Kirantichap yesterday. The tourists were en route from Kathmandu to Jiri and were bound for a trek to Mount Everest. All 22 were killed. ▲

*(Col. Jimmy Roberts has led over a dozen expeditions in the Nepal Himalaya and is credited with several first climbs. Col. Roberts is the pioneer of organized treks in Nepal. He is an ex-British Gurkha officer and lives in Pokhara, Nepal.)*

*(Photo: CSTK)*



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## HOW TO FIND US.



# THE CHALLENGE OF THE NEPAL HIMALAYA

By DR. HARKA GURUNG

Nepal Himalaya extending 800 kilometres between the Kangchenjunga massif and the Mahakali river accounts for a third of the Himalayan mountain system. Although there had been negotiations for a British expedition on Sagarmatha (Everest) in 1908, a French one to Makalu (1934) and for the Swiss on Dhaulagiri (1949), it was only in mid-twentieth century that Nepal opened its door. When the country finally became accessible, two factors made it attractive for climbers and explorers. First, here was a new territory teeming with high peaks, many of them giants that had been observed only from far. Of the 31 Himalayan peaks exceeding 7,600 metres, 22 studded the Nepalese horizon including eight of the world's 14 highest peaks. Their native Tibetan and Sanskrit names conjured up a virgin alpine realm.

The second factor that distinguished Nepal was its terra incognita character. And early accounts of its distal parts by J.D. Hooker, Douglas Freshfield, Arnold Heim and August Gansser further titillated the imagination of adventurous spirits. In spite of the reconnaissance survey of the country during 1924-27, much of the mountain region remained sketchy terrain. In fact, detailed maps of the Himalaya along the Nepal-China border became available only as late as 1979. A closer examination of these maps reveal that there are at least 208 summits exceeding 6,500 metres in elevation within five kilometres of the boundary on the Nepal side alone.

## The Golden Decade (1949-60)

Nepal was first opened to outside visitors in 1949. The pioneering exploration and mountaineering teams that year were one British team in the Langtang-Ganesh Himal area and a Swiss team in the Kangchenjunga region. By the end of the first decade, 84 large and small expeditions had visited the Nepal

Himalaya. There was a recognizable fluctuation in the growth of exploratory and climbing expeditions. The first four years until 1952 recorded only thirteen expeditions. The next three years (1953-55) was a boom period with 39 expeditions. Then followed a phase of lean growth with only 29 expeditions in five years.

At least fourteen nations participated during this first decade. The British led the field with 27 expeditions. In 1953, the year of Everest triumph, there were seven British expeditions in Nepal. And the only year without them was the final year (1960). The Japanese who sent their first team in 1952 came next with seventeen expeditions. There were five Japanese teams in 1959 but none in 1957. The Swiss accounted for ten expeditions although they did not visit in 1950, 1957 and 1959. The French sent only six expeditions but their dramatic triumph on the Annapurna was a big impetus to others. Small countries like Austria and New Zealand had three and two expeditions respectively and the same number came from neighbouring India and distant U.S. and Argentina. Australia, Canada, Denmark and West Germany had one expedition each and the Italians teamed up with the British on Ama Dablam. There were three joint expeditions while the first women's expedition came out in 1955.

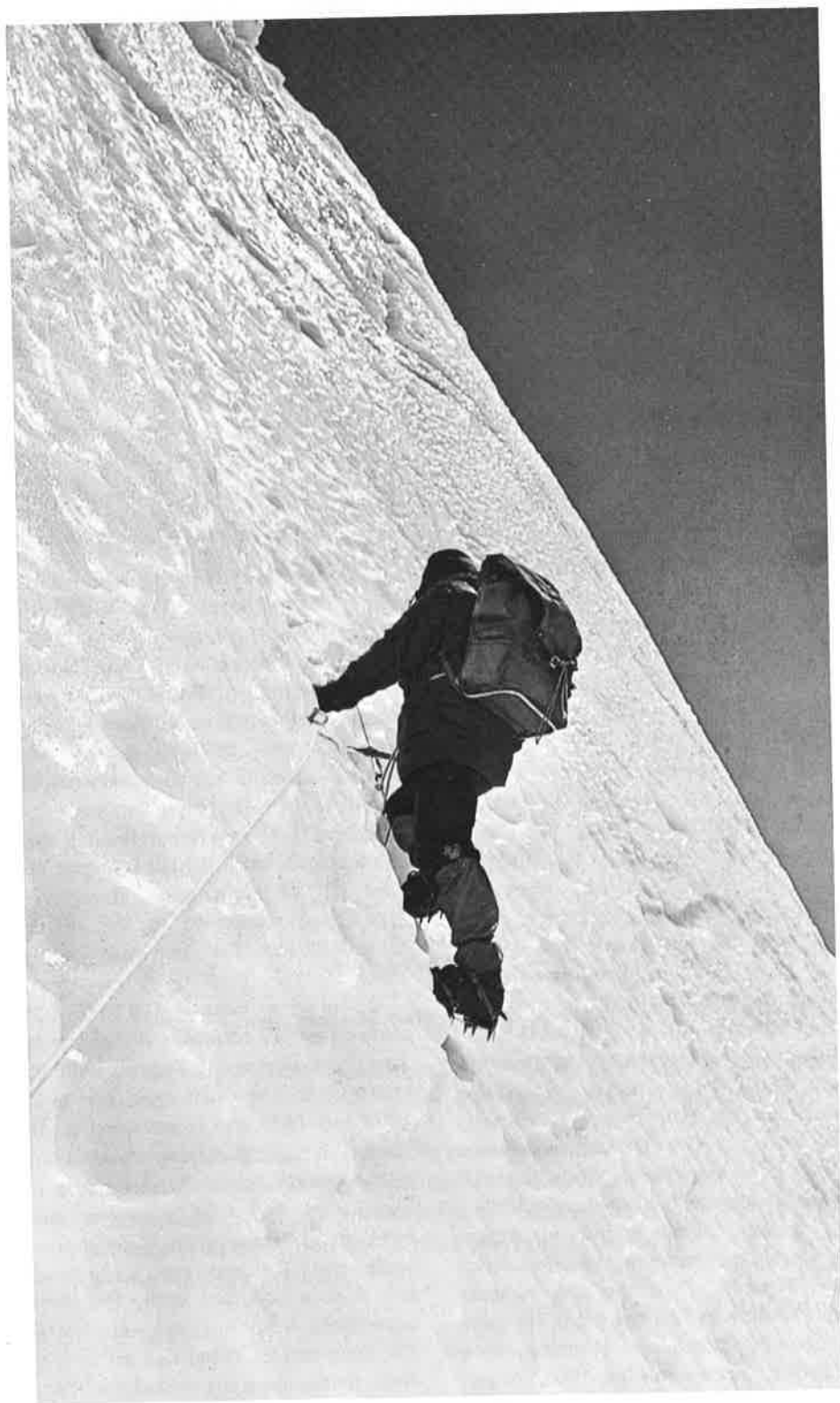
It was a decade of pioneer mountaineering that combined reconnaissance and climbing. And the achievements were impressive. All the Eight Thousanders within the Nepal Himalaya were climbed: Annapurna in 1950, Sagarmatha in 1953, Cho Oyu in 1954, Kangchenjunga and Makalu in 1955, Lho Tse and Manaslu in 1956 and Dhaulagiri in 1960. Sagarmatha was climbed thrice while Cho Oyu and Annapurna twice each. Other prominent first ascents were Pyramid Peak, Chulu West, Chamar, Bárun Tse, Pethang Tse, Ganesh, Putha Hiunchuli, Kanguru,

Annapurna II, Api and Himalchuli. Apart from these achievements were the extensive explorations that paved the way for other expeditions.

## Alpinism vs Politics (1961-1970.)

The second decade had normal climbing activities until 1965 with a total of 68 expeditions. The peak year was 1964 with 20 expeditions. Then in late 1965 came the ban on all mountaineering expeditions as a reaction to some 'expeditions' that had been engaging in clandestine political activities across the border in Tibet. During the interregnum of 1966-68, there were no mountaineering expeditions in Nepal although two trekking groups and various scientific expeditions were allowed to operate. Alpinism, however, triumphed when the Nepal Himalaya was opened again for mountaineering with a new set of regulations. Thirtyseven expeditions responded to this opportunity during the two-year period 1969-70.

During the decade 1961-70, 105 parties from 17 countries visited Nepal. Japan overwhelmed all others with 48 expeditions. They sent eight parties in 1963 and 1969 and it increased to 14 parties in 1970. Britain that had led the field in the previous decade sent only 15 expeditions. The third place was taken by West Germany with eight parties. India had six and the Netherlands and Austria had four each. The three expeditions from Australia were led by the same person. Other nations to send three parties were the United States and New Zealand. France, Switzerland, Italy and Yugoslavia had two each. Czechoslovakia, Denmark and Spain sent one expedition each. Two were international expeditions both with Swiss participation.



*A climber tackles an ice-wall on Makalu's SW pillar. photo: CSTK*

There were numerous successes despite the disruption of the 1966-68 climbing ban. The first ascents included Ama Dablam, Annapurna III, Nup Tse, Chamlang, Jannu, Nilgiri North, Pumo Ri, Kangtega, Numbur, Saipal, Glacier Dome, Gangapurna, Rock Noir, Gyachung Kang, Annapurna South, Baudha, Churen Himal, Peak 29 and Lho Tse Shar. Sagarmatha was climbed thrice and Glacier Dome was also ascended thrice in successive years. In addition, Cho Oyu, Annapurna I., Annapurna II, Annapurna III, Annapurna IV, Annapurna South and Makalu were reascended.

### **The Rising Crescendo (1971-81)**

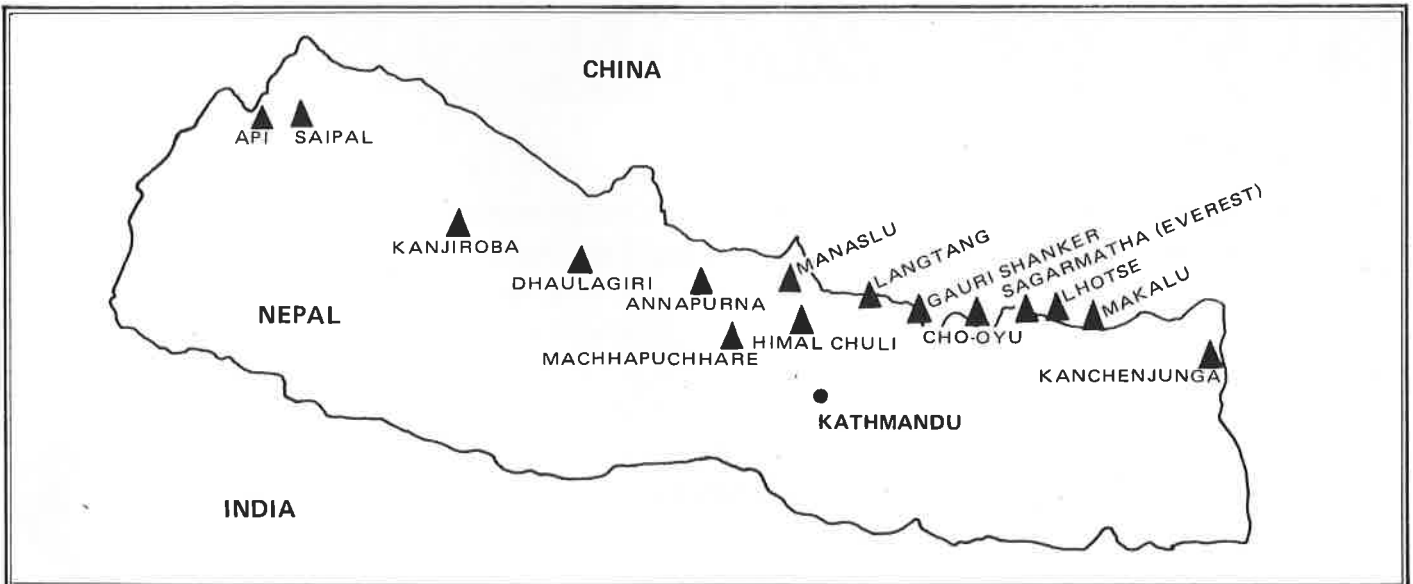
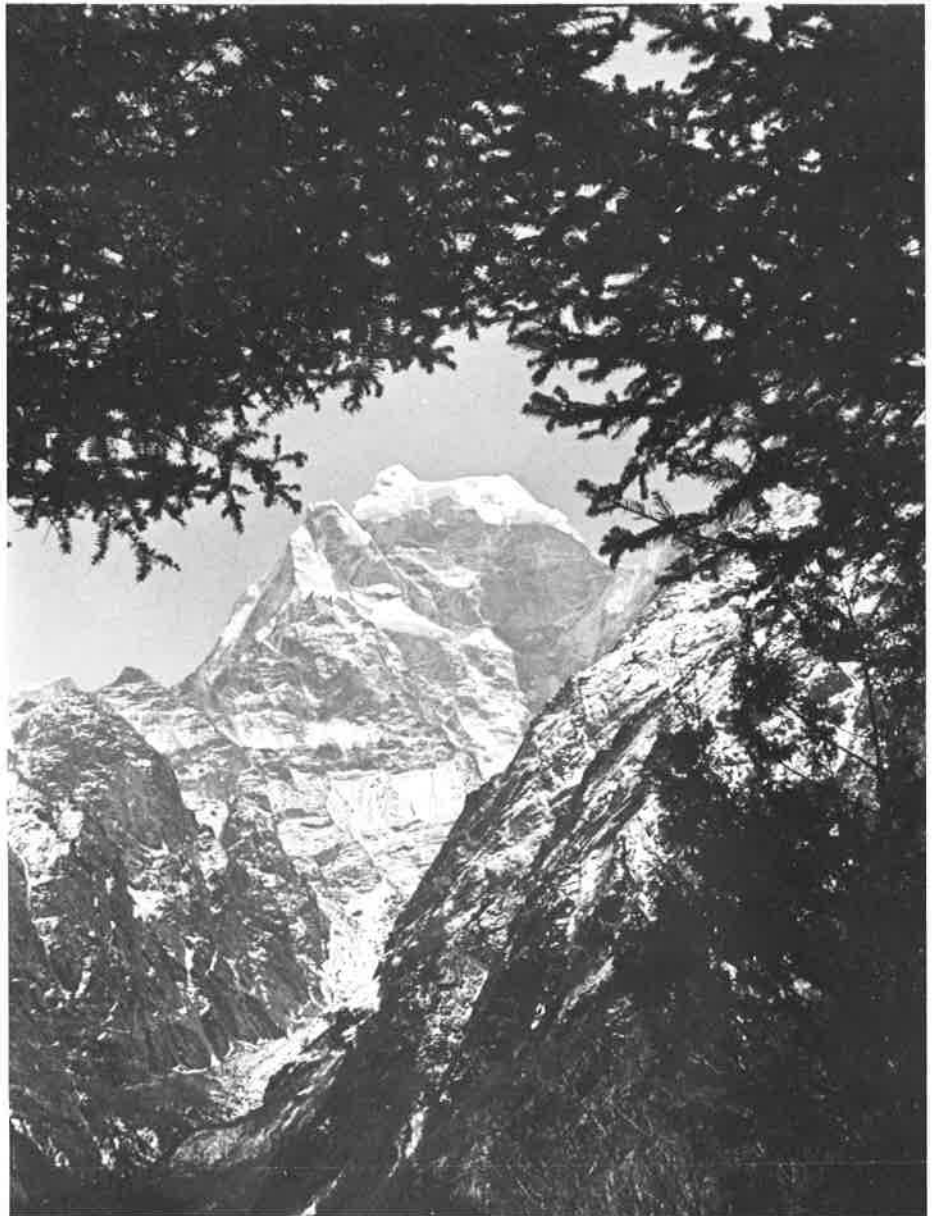
The third decade of mountaineering in the Nepal Himalaya showed an unprecedented increase in foreign expeditions. It totalled 404 as against 105 in the preceding decade. Initial increases were modest with an annual average of 27 parties until 1975. Absolute numbers actually decreased to 18 in 1976 and 19 in 1977. There was an immediate response when the government rationalised mountaineering management with the recognition of multiple routes to individual peaks and extension of climbing seasons. The number of expeditions more than doubled compared to the previous year and by 1981 the annual figure reached 74.

Nearly two dozen countries participated in the third decade. Japan accounted for 141 national and 8 joint expeditions out of a total of 404. There were 17 Japanese parties in 1981, 16 in 1973 and 22 in 1981. The British came with 30 parties followed by West Germany (28), France (27), U.S. (25), Austria (20) and Italy (19). Spain and Poland each sent fifteen expeditions. Nine were from Switzerland and seven from South Korea. Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia each sent six parties. Australia, Canada and the Netherlands had four expeditions each. Bulgaria, Iran and Mexico were new entrants with one expedition each. Nepal itself launched its first expedition in 1975 and subsequently participated in numerous joint expeditions on the border peaks.

All Eight Thousanders with the exception of Cho Oyu were climbed numerous times. Thus, the loftiest Sagarmatha was ascended sixteen times – twice in 1973, 1974, 1978, 1979 and 1980 and thrice in 1976. Manaslu that had engaged the Japanese four years initially was climbed ten times. Makalu, Dhaulagiri and Annapurna I were all climbed eight times. Even the renowned giants such as Kangchenjunga and Lho Tse yielded six times each. Neither were the beautiful peaks of Ama Dablam and Pumo Ri in Khumbu spared, each with seven ascents. Jannu, immortalised by Vittorio Sella in 1899 was climbed five times while Yalung Kang, christened in 1969, was ascended four times.

The Nepal Himalaya has thus enacted and witnessed many triumphs and tragedies in the last three decades. They make up a memorable chapter in human endeavour. Every mountain is like a diamond, each facet revealing a new dimension. And there are yet many more challenges. ▲

*(Dr. Harka Gurung is a Ph. D. in geography from Edinburg University, and a member of the Nepal Population Commission. Formerly vice chairman of the National Planning Commission, he has also served as Nepal's first Minister of State of Tourism as well as a Minister of State of Industry & Commerce.)*



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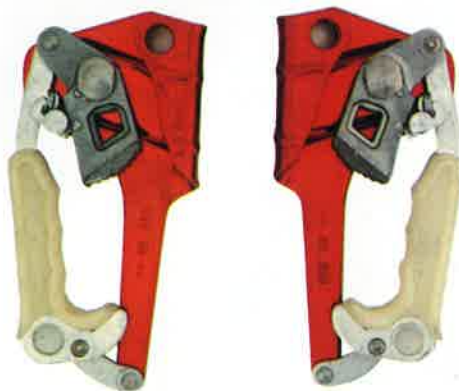
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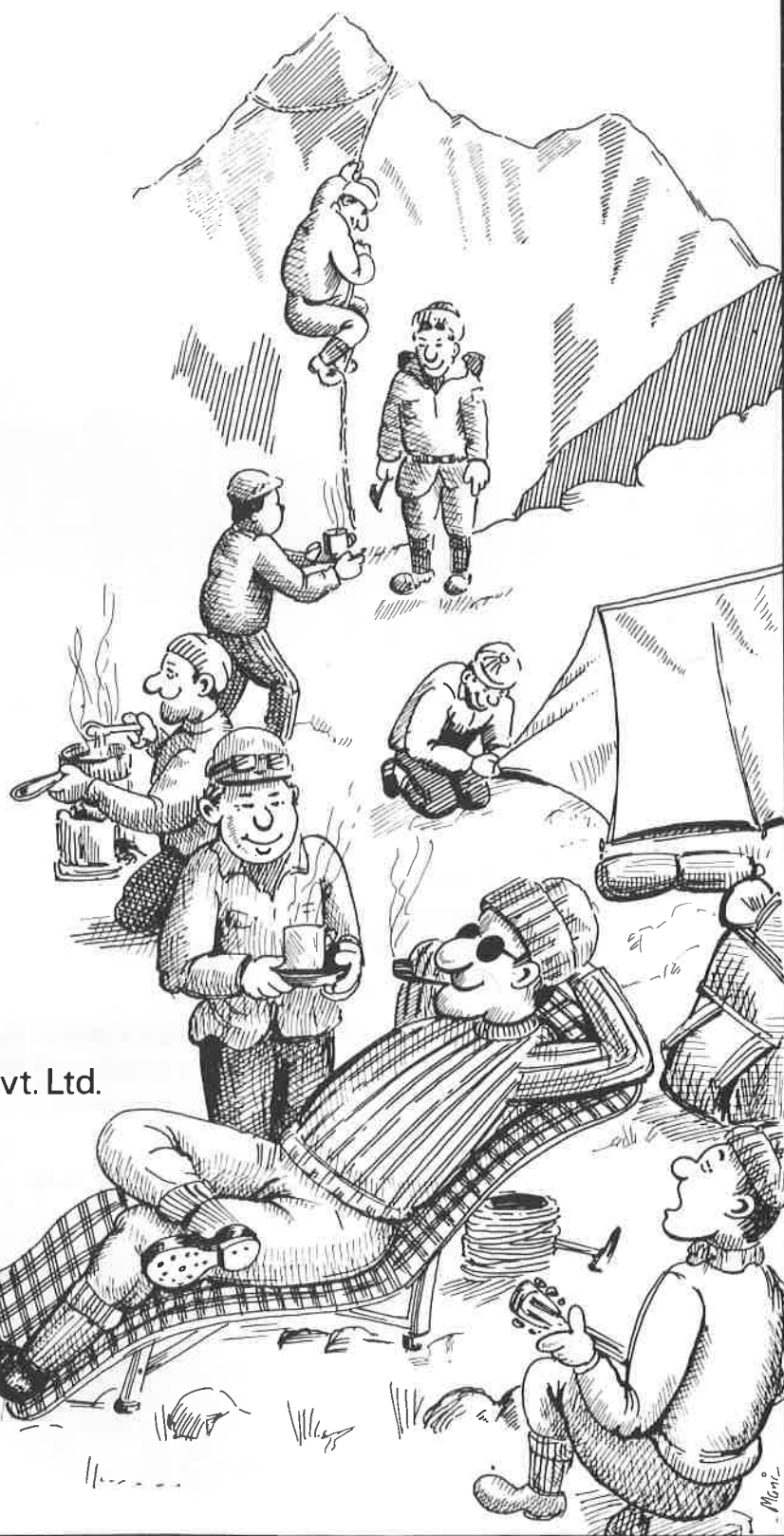
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By HERMANN WARTH

# COMMITTED NOT ONLY TO THE MOUNTAINS OF THE WORLD

"So Munich is finished — OK, I'll just move out to one of the rural suburban towns like Fürstfeldbruck" — this was the statement of a member of the German Automobile Club, a person responsible for tourism, during a conference of the Study Group on Questions of Tourism meeting in the South Bavarian resort town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen in August, 1979. It typifies a prevailing attitude.

The GERMAN ALPINE CLUB (GAC) — with its more than 400,000 members the largest association of Alpinists in the world — was founded back in 1869. As a true child of its time, the Club subscribed, more or less, to a naive belief in progress for about a century — this belief found concrete expression in a professed policy of 'opening up' the Alps. The construction of 300 alpine huts — many of which have since degenerated into mountain hotels — and some 40,000 km of hiking and climbing paths were the upshot. The infrastructure which was created is now luring more and more municipalities and private investment firms into a profit-making programme of expansion in the form of hotels, roads and ski-lift facilities. The selling of the Alps is rolling along now in high gear.

One could, of course, bemoan the situation and leave the thing at that: if Europeans are intent on destroying their natural surroundings for the sake of profit and greed, then that's their affair — if only these Westerners were not venturing forth to the far corners of the globe as conquerors, colonialists, 'civilizers' and tourists; heading, so to speak, for the rural countryside, the periphery of 'Fürstfeldbruck', after their 'Munich' metropolis can no longer offer the quality of life they are now seeking in the purlieu of rural towns. Are Europeans overseas

any wiser or is there a repetition of the same process? This is a question the German Alpine Club should also ask itself, because it supports mountaineering trips abroad and is indeed a partner in a corporation which is right up front in the race, namely the 'Mountaineering and Skiing School', a firm which along with 'Hauser Excursions International' is the largest trekking outfit (aside from its other objectives) in the Federal Republic of Germany.

The general state of the Alps and the intensive debate about the environment prompted the GAC in 1977 to pass a 'Basic Programme for the Protection of the Alpine Region. This programme pinpoints the following basic target objectives, among others: A stop to the construction of new alpine huts! New cable-lifts only in areas that have already been opened up to tourism! A stop to the construction of further 'second' and weekend cottages and apartments in the Alps! An end to the 'asphaltization' of the Alps! Special promotion of mountain agriculture! The creation of more protected areas and sanctuaries for plants and animals! A stop to the construction of new pow plants in the Alpine region, since the plants already in operation fully meet electricity demands and can be expanded if necessary! An equivalent (not necessarily identical) standard of living for all inhabitants in the Alps! In the interest of future generations to come, an end to the wanton destruction of the landscape!

One of the principal people behind this programme was the former President of the GAC Reinhard Sander. However, he did not view this problem in isolation and only in relation to the Alps. In discussions after my slide talks "From Lhotse to Makalu" in Munich and "Nepal, Dreamland and Reality" in the Alpine resort town of

Berchtesgaden (this last talk incidentally was explicitly presented under the slogan: 'The GAC should not simply be committed only to the mountains of the world, it must also feel an obligation to the people who live there'), Reinhard Sander and the manager of the GAC, Dr. R. Gebhardt, expressed to me their fears that Nepal and other mountainous areas of the planet could undergo a fateful form of 'development' such as the Alps have witnessed, and emphasized that tourism should not involve the wanton destruction of the very basis of existence of the local population. A study commissioned by and prepared for the GAC (Rob Coppock, "High Season. The consequences and potential of tourism in the region of Mount Everest", 1978) had shown that tourists account for some 10% of the annual destruction of forests in the Khumbu region. R. Sander thus proposed an afforestation initiative by GAC trekkers in the Khumbu region intended to raise consciousness and act as a signal to others. His appeal in the GAC NEWSLETTER (2/79) brought an unexpected response from more than 60 interested individuals!

In order to set up this GAC initiative (or something similar) in Nepal on the necessary legal footing, I was sent by the GAC to Nepal for exploratory discussions from June 4th to 8th, 1979. I had discussions, among others, with B.L. Upreti, Chief of the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Office (elevated to the status of a Department in 1981), P. Croft, New Zealand Co-Manager of the Sagarmatha National Park, M. Cheney, Manager of the Sherpa Cooperative and H.R. Gautschi, Deputy Director of the Swiss Association for Technical Assistance (SATA). The upshot of these talks was twofold: a) B.L. Upreti and P. Croft expressed support for the short-



term use of trekkers for afforestation work in the Sagarmatha National Park and b) both they and R. Gautschi agreed even more enthusiastically in principle to the construction of an alternative energy depot at the entrance to the National Park in Jhorsale.

Subsequently, two GAC trekking groups travelled to Nepal in Nov. 1979 and April 1980 after attending a two-day orientation seminar financed by the GAC and the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) under the direction of the mountain guide and geologist H. Konnerth. The first group contained 11 and the second 20 participants. Directly on the spot in Nepal, both groups were able to proceed from and build on the experience gained by the National Park personnel with an earlier British afforestation group of the organization ENDEAVOUR, which included, among others, J. Hunt, E. Hillary and T. Streather. The following tasks were accomplished by the GAC groups during their stay of approx. ten days each in the project area:

- collection of 6 kg of pine seeds and 300 g rhododendron seeds
- construction of a wire fence 1300 m long in one of the afforestation areas
- construction of a playground to divert the attention of children from using the fence as a new plaything
- work in the nurseries: construction of terraces, laying out of planting beds, filling of plastic bags with soil for the sowing of tree seeds
- preparation of approx. 1500 planting sites and approx. 100 terraces for planting

*Man, mountain and trees. A trekker walks past a thinning forest near Namche Bazar while yaks haul back-loads of firewood to Sagarmatha Base Camp.*



The experience gathered by the first group was evaluated together with the participants on January 12th, 1980. To quote the GTZ representative von Grotthus, who attended the meeting: "It was not possible in the November initiative to realize the objective of motivating local volunteer workers to pitch in their help. This was partially due to a lack of understanding on the part of the local people, and was partially the result of a preference for alternative activities; it was also due to the fact that the creation of a national park was decreed by the government without any hearing given to local interests. The participants failed to understand why the non-local National Park personnel were likewise not involved. It was suggested that during the next initiative they might possibly offer a certain financial incentive for gaining the cooperation of local volunteers by setting up a modest fund for this purpose. We must wait to see how this works out. Prospects for success do not look good." A response also noted was that the Khumbu area during the tourist seasons is emptied of local population, since people can earn good money in tourism; the upshot is that the locals are indeed quite able to perform the jobs involved in afforestation work, but that for financial reasons they choose not to.

Parallel to this initiative there is at the same time one underway involving the setting up of a kerosene depot in Jhorsa. All tourists are required there to pay an entrance fee to the National Park of 60 Nepalese rupees. On the back of the receipt are the words: "Be self-sufficient in your fuel supply before entering the Park. Buying fuel wood from local people or removing any wood materials from the forest is illegal." This is certainly a good guideline for forest preservation, but it is not easy to put into practice as long as there is no alternative energy source available. I worked up a cost estimate for the kerosene depot which was specifically planned to fill that need; this estimate figured the costs for containers, 2000 kerosene and the portage costs from Katari to Jhorsa (approx. 13 days) as a one-time GAC

input. The depot can be financially self-supporting if it is run on a proper basis, since new supplies of kerosene can be purchased with the income from kerosene sales.

Thanks to the excellent contacts of Dr. Gebhardt, the GAC succeeded in interesting the West German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation (BMZ) and the already mentioned Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) in the project. A letter written to me by R. Gebhardt states: "The GTZ has passed on a very favorable evaluation of the project to the BMZ. It looks as though, at the very least, the construction of the kerosene depot and the preparatory meeting in this connection will be subsidized." The GAC was then given a check for DM 13,600 from the Agency for Technical Cooperation. After deducting DM 3200 for a partial financing of the orientation seminars, I was presented by the GAC with the sum of DM 10,200 for the kerosene depot before leaving for Nepal to assume duties as Local Representative of the German Volunteer Service in March, 1980.

However, difficulties now cropped up on the Nepalese side. Originally it had been planned for the National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Office — under whose supervision the Sagarmatha National Park operates — to be responsible for the project. But according to standard Nepalese budgetary operating procedure, the income from the depot at the end of the fiscal year would have to be passed on to the Ministry of Finance and would then have to be re-requisitioned from there in order to refill the empty kerosene tanks. This constituted an impossible procedure for the smooth and proper functioning of the depot.

After a series of false starts and detours, and after the GAC initiative had been publicly announced by the author on the occasion of a seminar on 'Mountaineering in Nepal' held August 12th and 13th, 1980 in Kathmandu, an organizational model gradually took shape which circumvents the above-mentioned administrative difficulty: the Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) assumes responsibility for the depot; an

'Alternative Fuel to Mountain Areas Committee', consisting of one representative each from the National Parks and Wildlife Preservation Department, the Ministry of Tourism, the NOC, the Nepal Nature Conservation Society and the Trekking Agents Association, meets regularly in order to monitor the management of the depot. The following individuals are involved in an advisory capacity: one representative from the Sherpa Cooperative and a representative from the GAC (currently the author). The NOC located a contract agent for Jhorsa (Mr. Pasang Gyalijen Lama), who is responsible for the depot (purchasing, storage, maintenance, sales, book-keeping, accounting, sale/retire of containers and cookers); he is paid on the basis of a percentage of the kerosene sold (5% per liter). This agent is supervised by officials of the Sagarmatha National Park and the NOC, and is required to submit a monthly report to the NOC.

The kerosene depot was set up in December, 1981. If it functions properly, then it could also prove possible to watch tourists more strictly in respect to their consumption of wood in the National Park area, since an alternative energy source is now available. In order to motivate the local population living in the area of the National Park to increased utilization of alternative energy, the NOC has set a relatively cheap price per liter for the kerosene at the depot.

We still don't as yet have any final clear picture of how the system is working. If experience turns out to be positive, then there are plans to repeat the model in the areas of Langtang, the Annapurna Sanctuary, Manang and Rara Lake, using the same legal structure (NOC — Alternative Fuel to Mountain Areas — contract agent). The Swiss Alpine Club and the British Mount Everest Foundation have in the meantime expressed their interest in making some kind of contribution. The GAC is also reportedly prepared to finance a depot directly from its own funds.

In spite of this generally positive development, the basic problem of course continues to exist: kerosene or



gas do not constitute a satisfactory solution to the energy problem in Nepal, since these energy sources must be imported into the country in exchange for hard currency. The better long-term solution would be an energetic programme of afforestation in order to increase the supply of firewood. Such an option, however, exceeds the legal competence and capacity of an association like the GAC located far from the physical scene of action and not professionally involved as such with questions of development policy.

The GAC initiative is nothing more than a drop in the proverbial bucket; indeed, there are those who criticise the action as a kind of phoney gesture or conscience-soothing alibi. Nevertheless: many small drops like this can, over the long haul, fill that bucket. And if this action, even to a modest extent, can succeed in achieving its second

objective, namely altering the consciousness of mountain climbers and trekkers in the direction of an enhanced awareness that the 'consumption' of the mountain landscape by tourists necessarily entails ecological, economic and sociocultural consequences for the local inhabitants and that the tourist bears a responsibility for these consequences, then, I would submit, this initiative is indeed justified.

Translated by William Templer from *Mitteilungen des DAV (GAC NEWSLETTER)*, 2/82. ▲

*(Dr. Hermann Warth is resident representative of the German Volunteer Service in Nepal and is also an avid mountaineer. He has climbed Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest), Lhotse and Makalu besides other mountains in Nepal.)*

*More and more remote Himalayan valleys are becoming denuded with the passage of large expeditions. The Barun Valley (below) and a pile of juniper twigs alongside a kitchen tent at Makalu Base Camp (right).*



By ELIZABETH HAWLEY

# THE CHANGING MOUNTAINEERING SCENE IN NEPAL

When the UIAA was founded 50 years ago, mountaineering had not yet even begun within the isolated Himalayan kingdom of Nepal. It is true that some climbing had been done on border peaks accessible from Nepal's neighbours, notably on Mount Everest from Tibet and on Kangchenjunga from Sikkim, but assaults on peaks actually inside Nepal had never been permitted.

Climbing within Nepal began in the summer of 1949, when the noted British alpinist H. W. Tilman brought a very small party to explore and climb amongst the peaks of the Langtang, Ganesh and Jugal Himal, and in the following spring with the epic ascent of Annapurna I, the first 8,000-metre summit ever to be reached, by Maurice Herzog and his team of eight other Frenchmen and eight high-altitude Sherpas.

These two earliest expeditions within Nepal can broadly be said to have been the prototypes for the two kinds of mountaineering efforts that have been made in the Nepalese Himalayas ever since: the small, lightweight party moving against its objective in a limited period of time, and the larger, more elaborately equipped expedition employing siege tactics, establishing and stocking a series of high camps and finally making a summit push after weeks of preparations on the mountain.

For perhaps two decades the larger expeditions dominated the scene and their proportions grew ever larger. In 1973 it almost seemed as though there would be no limit on size, at least on Mount Everest. That spring Everest was besieged by an Italian expedition of 38 climbers, 20 of them military men, five doctors, a helicopter crew of ten, five radio technicians and six other Italians including the leader, Guido Monzino, plus about 70 Sherpas and other high-altitude Nepalese hel-

pers, whose combined effort put five Italians, two Sherpas and one Tamang on the summit — not a record-breaking number of summitters — via the standard climbing route up the West Face of Lhotse to the Southeast Ridge of Everest. In the autumn of the same year, a 47-member Japanese team led by Michio Yuasa assaulted Everest with the aid of about 60 Sherpas by two routes simultaneously. They failed in their bid to make the first ascent of the mountain's Southeast Face, but they succeeded in sending two Japanese to the summit by the standard route and in doing so made the first autumn ascent of the world's highest peak.

Such huge expeditions as these received considerable comment at the time, and Monzino's record-sized party of 64 members and even more Sherpas is not likely ever to be seen in the Nepalese Himalaya again. Teams of 20 members are now fairly rare, and the number of two, four or six-member parties has grown significantly in very recent years.

Last spring the summit of Kangchenjunga, the world's third-highest mountain, was successfully reached by both members of a two-member team, Reinhold Messner and Friedl Mutschlechner from the South Tirol, Italy, with Ang Dorje Sherpa, and they had followed much of a northern route pioneered by a four-member expedition led by Britain's Doug Scott in the spring of 1979. In the autumn of last year, the two members of a four-member French expedition who did most of the work forging a new route up the West Face of Manaslu, seventh-highest of the world's mountains, Pierre Beghin and Bernard Muller, succeeded in their climb.

There have in fact been successful ascents by men climbing entirely alone.

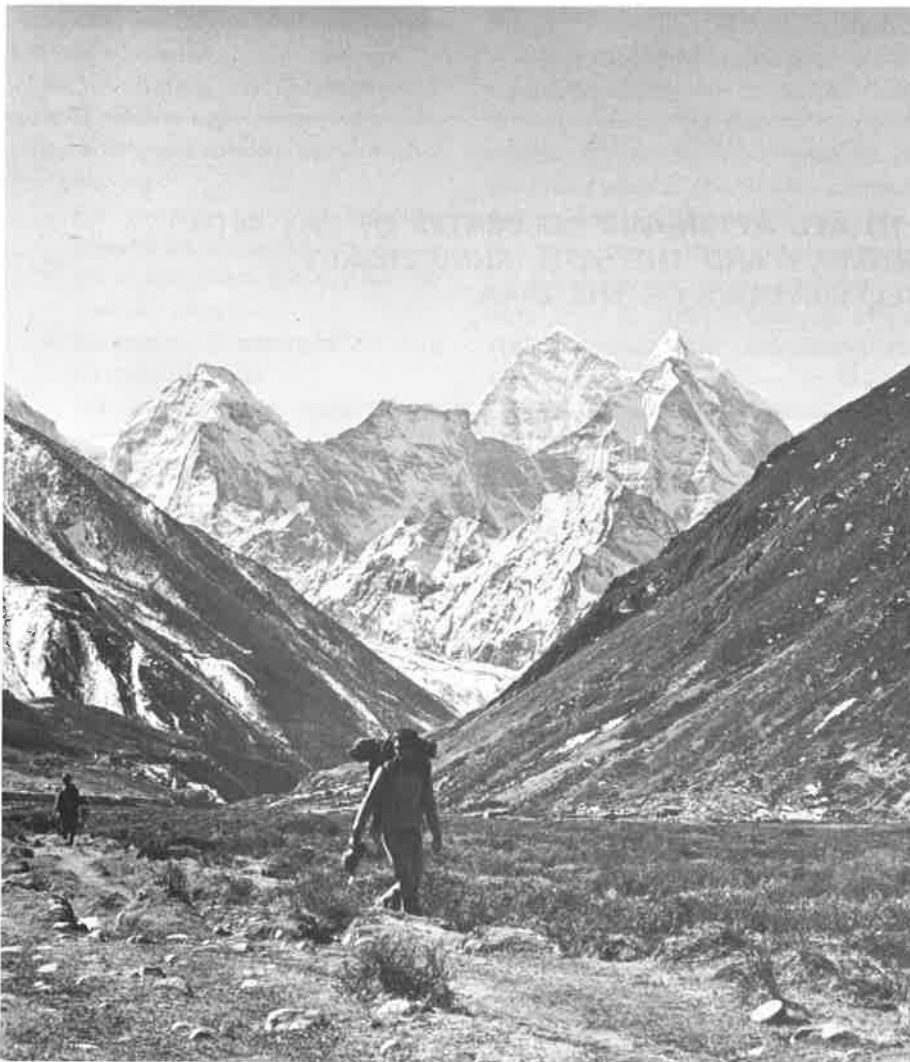
So far two solo climbs of 8,000-metre mountains have taken place in Nepal since Messner's historic solos of Nanga Parbat and the north side of Everest. In the spring of 1981, a relatively unknown Japanese climber, Hironobu Kamuro, aided by fixed ropes left in place by Canadians only a few weeks previously, successfully scaled Dhaulagiri I, sixth-highest of the world's mountains, by its standard Northeast Ridge route. He had not actually planned a solo ascent but climbed alone after his intended climbing partner dropped out. And in the autumn of 1981 another unplanned solo ascent was accomplished, this time by a Polish alpinist, Jerzy Kukuczka, on a previously unclimbed route up the West Face of Makalu, the world's fifth-highest mountain. (For doubters of the Polish solo there was confirmation of it when a toy Kukuczka said he had left at the top was found and retrieved by the next successful summitters, South Korean Heo Young-Ho and two Sherpas, Pasang Norbu and Ang Phurba, last May.)

Not all of the small expeditions, of course, have been successful — but then not all of the larger ones have either. And some of the largest successful ones in very recent years have been commercial climbs on routes well travelled, while smaller teams have often gone for new, unclimbed, difficult routes even in bitter winter weather. Actually of the small expeditions, those with a maximum of six members, 45 per cent were successful in reaching their summits during the last six climbing seasons beginning with the autumn of 1980, while the larger teams had the somewhat better success rate of 55 per cent.

Along with a reduction in size of climbing teams has been a marked drop in the use of artificial oxygen even



*Flying (above) has brought many Himalayan peaks within reach, saving months of trekking. A lone trekker (bottom) backpacks up the Khumbu Valley near Pheriche.*



on the very highest mountains. Really small teams, obviously, simply cannot manage to get heavy oxygen cylinders to high altitudes. But it was the successful ascent of Everest in May 1978 by Reinhold Messner and the Austrian mountaineer Peter Habeler without their having used any artificial oxygen throughout their climb to the top of the world, and without having suffered any noticeable damage to their brains as a result, that was followed immediately by a significant increase in the proportion of expeditions, large and small, that did not equip themselves with bottles of oxygen for climbing or sleeping. In the spring of 1978, while Messner and Habeler were climbing Everest with a predominantly Austrian expedition, fewer than half of all teams in the Nepalese Himalaya had no oxygen supplies or only a few cylinders for medical emergencies. But in the very next climbing season, that autumn, as many as two-thirds of all expeditions brought only medical oxygen or none at all.

In the spring of this year, an overwhelming 89 per cent, or 25 out of the season's 28 expeditions including teams to six 8,000-metre summits, took only a few bottles of medical oxygen if any. The three that did take and use artificial oxygen for climbing or sleeping were the Soviets on a new route on the Southwest Face of Everest in the first attempt by Soviet mountaineers on any 8,000er, South Koreans on Makalu's Southeast Ridge and a large Italian expedition who climbed the usual Southwest Face route on Kangchenjunga.

It is not only oxygen bottles that have been omitted from the scheme of things for an increasing number of expeditions. Sizable numbers of Sherpas have also. This can be seen, for example, in the Sherpa statistics for all the expeditions that have besieged Dhaulagiri I. During the period 1950-60, an average of about ten Sherpas were employed on the mountain — that is, not counting base camp staff — per expedition. From 1969 (there were no attempts from 1961 to 1968) to 1979, the average number was down to 6.5 Sherpas, and in the period from the spring of 1980 to and including the

spring of 1982, the average had dropped still further to 4.5.

The declining numbers of Sherpas per expedition can be attributed to several factors. Climbing techniques have advanced. A new generation of climbers prefer to do the job themselves or fear that on extremely difficult routes the Sherpas are not yet sufficiently proficient technically. Rising costs of employing high-altitude helpers, the decreasing sizes of loads they carry but the increasing wages, more and better free clothing and equipment and the additional cost of insurance, have meant that small, finance-it-yourself teams cannot afford more Sherpas than the Nepalese government's rules require as base camp staff. And now, in an age in which heavy canvas tents, hemp ropes and bulky foods can be replaced by nylon and freeze-dried items, small parties without Sherpa load-carriers can succeed.

It often used to be said that most Himalayan expeditions could not succeed without tough, loyal, steady Sherpas to get them up their mountains. But this would seem not to be true today. During the six climbing seasons in Nepal from the autumn of 1980 to and including the spring of 1982, a total of 103 expeditions climbed with Sherpas, and 51 per cent of these succeeded in reaching their summits. Another 34 teams had no Sherpas on their climbs, and only 47 per cent of these were successful. But for the 12 of these 34 no-Sherpa teams that had seven or more members, the success rate was actually 58 per cent.

What has developed, then, in the course of mountaineering in Nepal in three decades is something like the history of a century and more of climbing in the European Alps: more small parties, without guides or helpers, even soloists; ever more difficult routes, and very recently climbs under the

extreme weather conditions of winter months. Big — but not giant — expeditions will no doubt continue to assault Nepalese Himalayan peaks with plenty of fixed rope and hardware, and even oxygen cylinders and Sherpas, in the springtime, but one day there will be a solo ascent of Everest directissima up its Southwest Face in the dead of winter. ▲

*(Elizabeth Hawley is the executive director of the Himalayan Trust and has been in Nepal since 1960. Ms. Hawley is correspondent for Reuters and Time Magazine in Nepal, and specializes in mountaineering reporting.)*



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**THE UIAA  
FROM CHAMONIX TO KATHMANDU . . .**

The third international alpine congress was held in Chamonix in Aug-Sept 1932; the date and venue were accidentally symbolic because the conquest of Mont Blanc by the Genevese H.E. de Saussure had taken place exactly 150 years earlier.

At its meeting, the Chamonix congress decided to supply the new organisation with more specific tasks, notably the following:

- the encouragement of mountaineering education for the young
- the development and standardisation of trail markers
- the posting of avalanche warnings on classical routes
- the protection of shelters from vandalism
- the establishment of a system for rating climbing difficulties that would overlook the importance of meteorological and psychological factors
- the siting of shelters in such a fashion that they be erected at low enough an altitude to prevent any degradation of the routes they serve as points of departure.

The first international UIAA assembly took place in 1933 at Cortina d'Ampezzo at the invitation of the Italian Alpine Club and in the shape of a fourth international mountaineering congress. The assembly recognised four official languages: French, English, German and Italian. In addition, it created the first standing commission whose tasks were

to study mountaineering alpine tourism, mountain science, and mountain art and literature.

Despite the fact that the UIAA was having trouble converting its members' wishes to realities, the first seven years (1932-1939) were to be a period of creativity. Under the Executive Committee's impetus, the Bureau undertook studies of matters of interest to all mountain people. The UIAA's principal field of activity continued to be Europe, but there was a rising problem about its expansion on other continents. A letter from G. Bobbas, delegate of the Italian Alpine Club, emphasised the timeliness for the Union, in keeping with its international character, to take to heart the development of mountaineering in the Caucasus and Himalaya and open its doors to organisations which were sure to be created among those distant ranges. In this connection it might be noted that the adherence of the USSR was to take place in 1966 and that of Nepal in 1975.

1947 was the year for the official resumption of regular UIAA assemblies. In 1948, the Bureau regularly published a pamphlet listing mountaineering work published in European countries. In 1950 UIAA consisted of 24 associations representing twenty countries with a total of about 500,000 climbers. In 1953 the assembly took a big step by travelling to Delphi for its annual meeting. This was the year of the conquest of Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest),

an epic which in a sense marks the end of historical mountain exploration.

In Sept 1964, the UIAA seal of approval was officially approved in Switzerland and in 1965 internationally. In 1967 the Bureau appeared desirous of insuring fair representation on the Executive Committee of every region in the world. In the fall of 1972 the UIAA celebrated its fortieth anniversary in the lovely setting of the Chillon Castle (Switzerland).

Early in 1976 the UIAA's expeditions commission was created, which had three missions: a) to establish a chronological table of projected expeditions that would help prevent overlaps, b) to improve relations with host countries in order to achieve the easing of local regulations, c) to work out a code of good-will for use by expedition leaders. In 1978 the full text of Nepalese regulations was to be published in the UIAA Bulletin and R. Riefel (France) was appointed UIAA representative in Kathmandu.

In 1981 the UIAA project was completed at Manang. A training course for Nepali climbing leaders took place in a mountaineering school built by the Planinarski Savez Jugoslavice under the Union's aegis. Attended by some 40 Nepalis the course benefitted from the presence of four European guides who had been supplied by the associations. (Based on UIAA's "De Chamonix . . . à Kathmandu".)

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