

HIMALAYAN NOTES

HIMALAYAS, 1960.—The summit of Annapurna II, 26,041 ft., was reached on May 17 by C. J. S. Bonington, R. H. Grant and Ang Nyima of the Joint Services Nepal Expedition. Other members of the expedition made the third ascent of Annapurna IV, first climbed in 1955.¹

Kurt Diemberger, P. Diener, E. Forrer and E. Schelbert, accompanied by two Sherpas made the first ascent of Dhaulagiri on May 13. Much help on the rocky pitches of the North-east spur was derived from the pitons and ropes left by Moravec's party on last year's attempt. From the junction of the North-east and South-east ridges onward the arête is less steep than in the lower portions and with the exception of one rather severe rock pitch the final ascent did not offer any noteworthy technical difficulties. The ascent was made without oxygen. Two other members of the party reached the top a few days later. We hope to publish an account of this expedition in a later issue.

Gosainthan, in Tibet, is now the only unclimbed 8,000-m. peak.

An Austrian party achieved a noteworthy success in the Karakoram where Diether Marchart and Günther Stärker succeeded in reaching the summit of Disteghil Sar, 25,868 ft., on June 9. The West ridge was gained by way of a steep ice couloir, Camp III being established at about 23,000 ft. Raditschnig, Mayr and Stefan not being in very good condition, Marchart and Stärker set out for the final assault, only reaching the summit at 6 p.m. The cold was intense and the party got back, exhausted, to Camp III at 8.30 p.m. The weather then broke but the next day they managed to battle their way down to Camp II at 21,326 ft. The next stage, to Camp I (18,700 ft.), was completed in abominable conditions of snow and weather. Eventually Base Camp was reached but both Marchart and Stärker were badly frost-bitten on fingers and toes. They were flown back to Vienna for treatment and we are glad to know that their injuries were not as serious as had at first been supposed and responded well to treatment. Herr Marchart, it may be mentioned, is only twenty years of age.

Api (23,399 ft.) and Himal Chuli (25,801 ft.) were both climbed by Japanese parties and the first Yugo-Slav expedition to visit the Himalayas succeeded in climbing Trisul II and III.

Mr. P. Wallace, accompanied by two Sherpas, made the second ascent of the highest peak of the Jugal Himal (24,299 ft.), first climbed in 1955.

¹ For details of the second ascent see *A. J.* 62. 173.

A Chinese party claimed to have reached the summit of Mount Everest. At the time of writing the information about this ascent is scanty and some of it curious. According to a Press report the assault party left the highest camp at 27,900 ft. at 9.30 a.m. (Peking time) on May 24 and reached the summit at 4.20 a.m. next day. Nearly nineteen hours were therefore spent in ascending a little more than 1,100 ft.; in addition to hurricane force winds and temperatures of 40° below zero the climbers are said to have met with extraordinary difficulties. Three hours were taken at one point to climb a rock 12 ft. high (one member of the party is said to have fallen four times in attempting it and was ordered to stay behind) and half an hour was required to climb another only 3 ft. high. Owing to the unorthodox time of arrival on the summit it was impossible to take photographs.

At 28,960 ft. the oxygen supply was exhausted, but in spite of this and of 'appalling headaches, poor vision and excessive panting', it was found possible to carry up a bust of Mao Tse-Tung and erect it on the summit. The 'main inspiration' for the ascent was 'the party's general political line showing them how to dare to think and dare to act'. Further details of the Chinese claim will be awaited with interest. As the June bulletin of *Les Alpes* says 'Man wird gut tun, weitere Meldungen abzuwarten.'

On this subject, *La Montagne et Alpinisme* writes:

'On savait en France que les Chinois avaient organisé une grande expédition: ils avaient procédé à d'importants achats de matériel en France notamment des appareils à oxygène.

D'après les éléments publiés par la presse—dont plusieurs grands organes ont étalé à cette occasion leur incroyable ignorance de l'histoire de l'Everest, pourtant si facile à combler—la cordée d'assaut quitta le dernier camp, placé à 8500 m environ au matin du 24 mai; comprenant un quatrième membre Lin Lien-man, qui abandonna le soir pour laisser son oxygène à ses camarades, elle rejoignit l'arête, par un passage de grande difficulté (3 mètres prenant 3 heures) au-dessus du "deuxième ressaut". Les trois autres grimpeurs parvinrent au sommet le 25 mai à 4 h 30 du matin, ayant poursuivi l'ascension toute la nuit.

L'ascension finale a donc été extraordinairement lente pour des alpinistes disposant d'oxygène et d'autres observations pourraient être présentées. Mais il nous paraît préférable d'attendre la publication du récit des alpinistes eux-mêmes.

Radio-Pékin a annoncé que la voie suivie avait été jusqu'ici "considérée comme impossible à escalader par les alpinistes occidentaux". On n'a pas besoin de souligner ici, auprès des lecteurs avertis, que la vérité était bien différente: la voie ne paraissait présenter

aucune difficulté spéciale pour une expédition dotée d'appareils à oxygène et de matériel moderne.

Il est vrai que cet itinéraire était inaccessible aux alpinistes occidentaux, mais politiquement.'

For our own part we read the reports with surprise. There had been little in recent articles² by the Chinese to suggest that they were yet ready to attack so formidable and lofty an obstacle.

While these strange events were in progress on the north side of Everest, an Indian expedition on the Nepal side of the mountain was turned back by bad weather at a height of about 28,300 ft.

Unfortunately some despatches got mauled in transmission. According to the 'New Yorker' the despatch was received as follows:—'New Delhi, India, May 26—(Reuters)—A first attempt by the Indian expedition to reach the summit of Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain, has failed because of blinding snow and strong winds, the Indian defense ministry announced here tonight.'

A party led by Sir Edmund Hillary will be in the Himalayas during the winter, living in a hut at a height of nearly 20,000 ft., to see how man can be acclimatised to great heights without oxygen. The expedition is also hoping to find a Yeti, to carry out investigations into solar radiation and to make an ascent of Makalu without oxygen.

At the time of going to press a small German expedition under the lead of Michael Anderl is at work in the Eastern Karakoram.

The first ascent of Masherbrum was made on July 6 by George I. Bell and William Unsoeld, and was repeated on July 8 by Nicholas B. Clinch and Capt. R. Jawed Akhter (Pakistan Army).

² See Mr. Shih Chan-Chun's articles on Minya Konka (*A. J.* 63. 194) and Muztagh Ata (*A. J.* 64. 78).