

EDITORIAL

MOUNTAINEERING was never a game of numbers. There were no runs to be scored or goals to be counted. Other than the heights of peaks, only human endeavour mattered. But now a new number game is emerging, recording the same endeavours and achievements. By 1992, there were 107 ascents of Cho Oyu, 112 ascents of Ama Dablam and the 150th ascent of Everest. 52 persons climbed Everest in the summer of 1992, with 32 persons standing on the summit on one day. By 1993 even these records were bettered and more than 500 persons have now climbed Everest. At this rate, soon we will have the 259th ascent of Rum Doodle!

Amidst this rush, mountaineers have also been enterprising, as is evident in the following pages of this volume. Exploring Gorichen, and Basingthang peaks in Bhutan, breaking new ground (and a leg) in Mongolia, reaching Danu Dhura and Rupin Ghati passes, and many other adventures were undertaken. The expedition to the Panch Chuli group is covered in detail; climbs, achievements, the rescue and above all its great fun. The correction of the mistaken so-called ascents of Panch Chuli III, IV and V after 28 years, goes to stress the maxim that truth ultimately prevails. In similar vein, in the Book Reviews, facts about the 1939 K2 tragedy and the 1984 Indian Everest expedition are stated and discussed. The variety of books on mountaineering, covered here, show that mountaineers can write as vigorously as they can climb.

In the year of the 40th anniversary of the first ascent of Everest, the highest peak also receives attention here. An expedition records the crowds and the junk on the mountain, the Japanese make gallant attempts in winter and the Indians fail on the route from the north. In between the crowds a climber claims a 'solo', perhaps an indication of how to use the crowds to be alone! These ideas are explored elsewhere to explain mountaineering's psychological utility and 'other experiences'.

There are dawdles in the Dibibokri and elsewhere, unsolved enigmas like Nilkanth's south face or climbing secret mountains like Gyala Peri. In short enough temptations to look forward to.

With the passing away of D.F.O. Dangar, the H.J. has lost a devoted supporter. He indexed H.J.s for many years and the systems set by him are still being followed. Himalayan literature was never better served by someone who never visited the Himalaya.

I hope readers will enjoy this 49th volume in the 65th year of the Club. With 17 articles, 24 notes... Oops, we are back to the number game again! Sorry, it does not seem that we will escape from it.

Happy reading.

HARISH KAPADIA