

THE HEROES RIDE INTO WELCOMING THROUG IN TEMPLE SQUARE OF BHADGAON. TENZING STANDS IN LEADING JEEP, HUNT AND HILLARY SIT IN SECOND



BRITISH ARE INCLUDED when invited to share decorated platform at Banepa. Hillary, wearing sunshade cap, grins as crowd yells, "Hero Tenzing!"



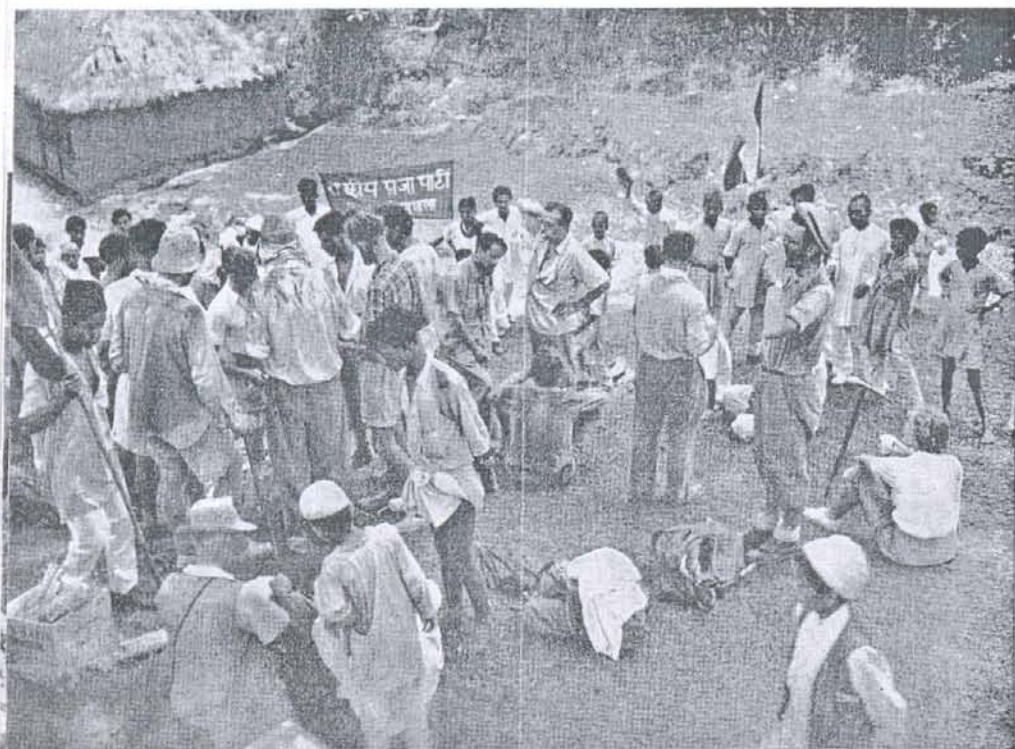
COACH CARRIES TENZING FACING FRONT, THE BRITISH RIDING BACKWARD→

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



# RACE-CONSCIOUS ASIANS TAKE OVER TENZING . . .

The expedition was still on the mountain and virtually out of communication when up sprang a wildfire rumor that Tenzing had topped the peak before Hillary, had indeed hauled the exhausted white man to the summit on a rope. Announcement that Hillary and Hunt—but not Tenzing—would be knighted fed the rumor with the fuel of Asian resentment. Suddenly the chosen champion of every nationalist—and Communist—in India and Nepal, the Sherpa became the center of a second jealous



NEPALESE DELEGATION, LOOKING FOR TENZING, GIVE THE BRITISH CURIOUS BUT COOL RECEPTION



COLONEL HUNT SAYS TEAMWORK BEAT EVEREST

## . . . BUT THEY ARE GIVEN THE LIE IN TENZING'S

*LIFE's India Correspondent James Burke met Tenzing Norkey above Katmandu, before his rabid coaches had captured him. The Sherpa sat down on a grassy hill above the little Nepalese village of Hukse and in his soft-voiced English told Burke his true story—and revealed the true feelings of a devout, affable, modest man. It was night, and Tenzing held a flashlight while Burke wrote down verbatim the following broken phrases which bore the unmistakable ring of truth.*

Everest place my home. My people name Everest Chomolungma. That mean mountain birds cannot fly over. I think good name, don't you? Sometimes I climb ridge above Nanpa La [a 19,000-foot pass near Tenzing's home village of Thami] for better view Chomolungma. Then I sit think what lamas at Thyangboche [the main Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the area] say. They say Buddha god live there on top and they make worship to mountain. I have feeling for climbing to top and making worship more close to Buddha god. Not same feeling like English Sahibs ho say want "conquer" mountain. I feel more making pilgrimage.

### How did he get started?

One night 1933 I and friends run off from Thami, go Darjeeling be climbers. We very

frightened that time. We hear many noises. Maybe snowman [the famed "abominable snowman" of the Himalayas, described in *LIFE*, Dec. 31, 1951] because next day we find some his tracks. You know I never see snow-



TENZING'S FAMILY IN NEPAL

man but other Sherpa have. He never kill man but just bite if anyone trouble him.

Twenty year nearly I go expeditions everywhere Himalaya. I go Tirich Mir in northwest

and Nanga Parbat. This side I been Bandar Punch, Satopanth, Kedarnath, Nanda Devi. Many mountains big little I climb. Very little time home with family. Maybe six month one year. Last year only four month. I no like that. But I learn no other work only climbing. In my family I alone work. I have wife and two daughters [see cut]. They good. But we poor. No house no land very small money I have. Family starve if I no climb. But I like with expeditions. All expedition leaders give me plenty chance. They say go climb top. I try hard.

Some people say "Tenzing got third lung because herded yaks 17,000 feet when boy." That no can be. But doctor once tell me living high place make lung grow bigger. Better able climb high.

### Was Everest the hardest climb?

Everest no hardest climb. Everest no easy but Nanda Devi with French expedition 1951 most dangerous for me. On icefall ice very raw. Steep drop both sides. I climb slowly one inch one time. No place hold. Very small put foot. Ice very slippery.

On Swiss expedition [to Everest] last year we get 27,550 feet. So cold give boxing blows keep warm. When spit it become ice, fall like stone. Breathing become snow and stick to hair on face. One small tent no sleeping bag. Next



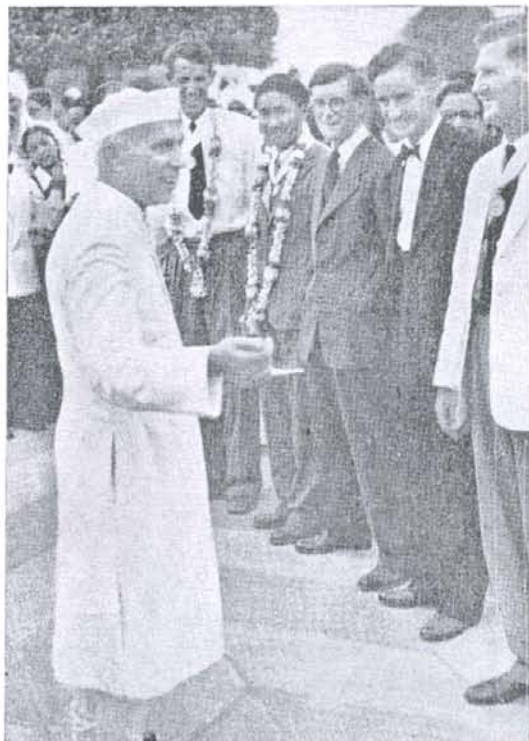
quarrel as Nepalese and Indians bickered over his citizenship. Out from Katmandu forged a party of Nepalese youths to meet the returning climbers. Intercepting some Indian reporters, they forced them to attest that Tenzing was Nepalese. Accosting Jim Burke, LIFE's correspondent, they tried to get him to say the British were misusing the Sherpa. Finding Tenzing they quickly made him a captive and bewildered hero.

Baffled by the uproar, Hunt tried to explain the roles of both Tenzing

and Hillary as part of the whole expedition and fed further fuel to the flames by tactless reference to Tenzing's lack of technical climbing experience. Then in Katmandu, where Nepal's king conferred decorations on Hunt and Hillary but a higher one on the Sherpa, Burke came on Tenzing surrounded by advisers who had maneuvered him into an anti-British, all-Asia press conference and uncharacteristically resentful remarks, which did not sound at all like the Tenzing revealed in his own words below.



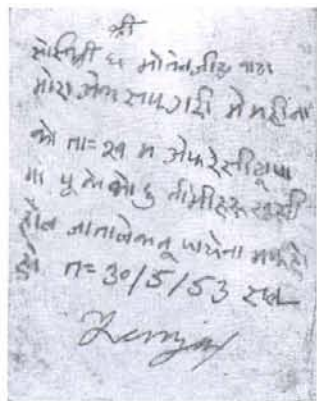
TENZING, FLANKED BY "ADVISERS," SAYS THAT HE IS THE MOST EXPERIENCED OF EVEREST CLIMBERS



LATER, BACK IN HARMONY, PARTY MEETS NEHRU

## OWN WORDS TO 'LIFE'

morning oxygen no work because freezing. I try pump but after cannot pumping, throw away and leave there. We go climbing without oxygen to 28,215 feet. This highest point. Can no go much higher. No food no drink for 24



TENZING'S NOTE OF TRIUMPH

hour. If have one cup tea think can climb top. We fail but everyone so happy we climb highest point. But no flower that high so Sahibs make sausage garland give us. We dance happy.

After second Swiss expedition 1952 I get sick. First I think no go again. Then think must try again. Must get top Chomolungma. Then I begin feel stronger. When I get on mountain [on the British expedition] maybe halfway up I no more feel hungry thirsty. Also forget family and no think afraid. Only think must get top. Up 27,900 feet where Hillary and I stop for night no sleep much. Maybe one two hours then wake up. Throat feel choking. But keep thinking must get top.

### How did he feel on the summit?

On top I no think anything at first. Then I look at Hillary. He hold out hand for shake. I shake then throw arms around him and we hit other on back. Very happy. I look every side. Good day, no much wind. All hills below look like Buddha gods. I can see very far. North in Tibet I see Rongbuk Gampa [monastery] and North Col where old expedition come. That way look very hard. In west I see Thyangboche and I think lamas praying there. I put little offering in snow. I feel very good. I have make worship close to Buddha god like think when I am boy on ridge above Nanya La.

Hillary ask me hold up flags on ax handle. I hold up British, Nepal and U.N. flags for picture, also Indian. Friend in Darjeeling give

me Indian flag, I ask Colonel Hunt if all right take it to top and he say "good." [A picture in color of Tenzing holding the flags appears on p. 127, but until Tenzing made this report, it was not known that he had displayed the Indian flag, and it is not mentioned in the caption.]

Next day back at camp I get Sherpa write letter my family [Tenzing can neither read nor write, except for his own name]. It say, "This letter is from Tenzing. Myself along with one Sahib reached summit Everest on 29th May. Hope you will feel happy. Cannot write more. May I be excused." I sign [see cut].

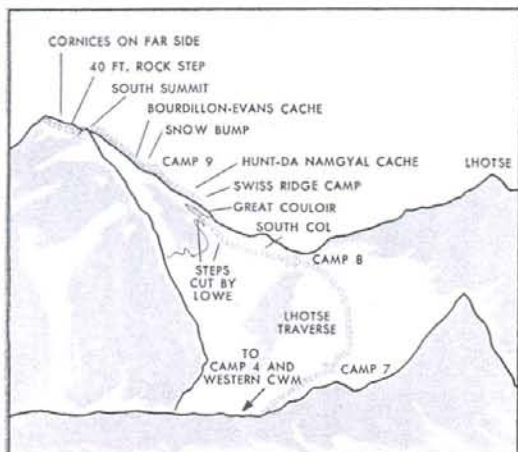
### Did he get to the top first?

Who reach top first? That make much trouble. If I say Hillary first, Indian, Nepali people unhappy. If I say I first European people unhappy. If you agree, I like say both got top together almost same time. If you everybody write that way, no trouble.

Same trouble myself. Some people say I Nepali some say Indian. My sisters my mother living here. But now I live India with wife daughters. For me Indian Nepali same. I am Nepali but I think I also Indian.

We should all be same—Hillary, myself, Indian, Nepali, everybody.





ROUTE TO SUMMIT followed by Hillary and Tenzing is shown in sketch, which locates points mentioned in this article.

# HILLARY'S FIRSTHAND ACCOUNT



MOVING DOWN AFTER TRIUMPH, HILLARY AND TENZING ARE STILL UNITED AND DELIGHTED

The great mountaineer from New Zealand tells how he and Sherpa Tenzing Norkey battled their way across the slanting snowfields, up rocky cliffs and around the icy cornices to the summit of Mt. Everest

by SIR EDMUND P. HILLARY

*For the final assault on Mount Everest, launched from an advanced base 21,000 feet up the mountain, Colonel John Hunt, the leader of the British expedition, selected two teams of two men each. The teams left within hours of each other, Charles Evans and Tom Bourdillon going first, but it was not a race. Edmund Hillary, the New Zealander beekeeper, and Tenzing Norkey, the veteran Sherpa guide, pressed on after Evans and Bourdillon had been turned back 300 feet short of the top. Here is Sir Edmund Hillary's own account, written for the London Times and LIFE, of his and Tenzing's successful climb to Everest's summit:*

THE assault party composed of Tenzing and myself arrived at Camp Seven, 24,000 feet high on the Lhotse face, after a three and one quarter hour trip up from Camp Four advanced base, 2,800 feet below. We found our support party, George Lowe and Alfred Gregory, already in residence together with the three Sherpa porters, Ang Nima, Ang Tembar and Pamber, who we were hoping would carry a camp for us high on the southeast ridge. We also had five other Sherpas who were to carry loads as far as South Col [see climber's glossary, p. 131], and then return to a lower camp.

After a restful night's sleep—the four of us used sleeping oxygen—we set off next morning in good heart for South Col. At 9:30, when we were nearly at the top of Lhotse glacier, we caught our first glimpse of tiny figures on the southeast ridge. It was Evans and Bourdillon,

making their first assault on the mountain, and Col. Hunt, the leader of the expedition, and Da Namgyal, a Sherpa porter, carrying food and oxygen up the ridge for our future use. We were able to watch their progress almost continuously as we crossed the great traverse under Lhotse and moved up onto South Col.

At one p.m. we were greatly excited to see Evans and Bourdillon disappear over the south summit before they were blotted out by drifting clouds. By now Hunt and Da Namgyal were slowly descending to South Col camp and as they seemed in some distress we went up to meet and assist them. They were in an exhausted condition. Hunt, who had never spared himself throughout the trip, had made a magnificent effort and carried the loads some 150 feet above the old Swiss ridge camp to a height of approximately 27,350 feet. The two had then descended without oxygen in order to conserve supplies for the assault. At 3 p.m. Evans and Bourdillon appeared out of the mist on the southeast ridge and moved very slowly down the steep couloir leading to South Col. They were obviously very tired after their tremendous effort and we went up to meet them with hot drinks and escorted them back to camp. They confirmed they had successfully reached the south summit—28,720 feet—and so had been far higher than men had ever been before. They reported that the ridge along to the top looked like a very formidable proposition.

South Col can rarely be a cheerful spot but the night of May 26

COPYRIGHT 1953 BY TIME INC. REPRODUCTION IN FULL OR IN PART STRICTLY PROHIBITED.

TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 131





**MOVING UP,** Tenzing, (*left*) and Hillary test oxygen at 22,000 feet. Heavily laden, they are ready to tote last supplies up to assault camp, where both will

need heavier clothing. Hillary is hooded as protection against sun and Tenzing hopefully carries flags furled on ice ax. In back is a Sherpa carrier, Ang Nima.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE





WEIRD LIGHT IN THIN AIR 21,000 FEET UP ILLUMINATES THE HIGH HIMALAYAN SCENE. THE STEEP FLANK OF EVEREST ITSELF SOARS OUT OF THE PICTURE AT LEFT.



**LOFTY CRAG** gives Hillary (*left*) and Tenzing a chance to put aside packs for rest. With rations,

sleeping bags and oxygen they carried loads of 60 pounds up to the final assault camp at 27,800 feet.



**CLIMBING AGAIN**, bent for burdens and balance, they labor up steep pitch. Though they took

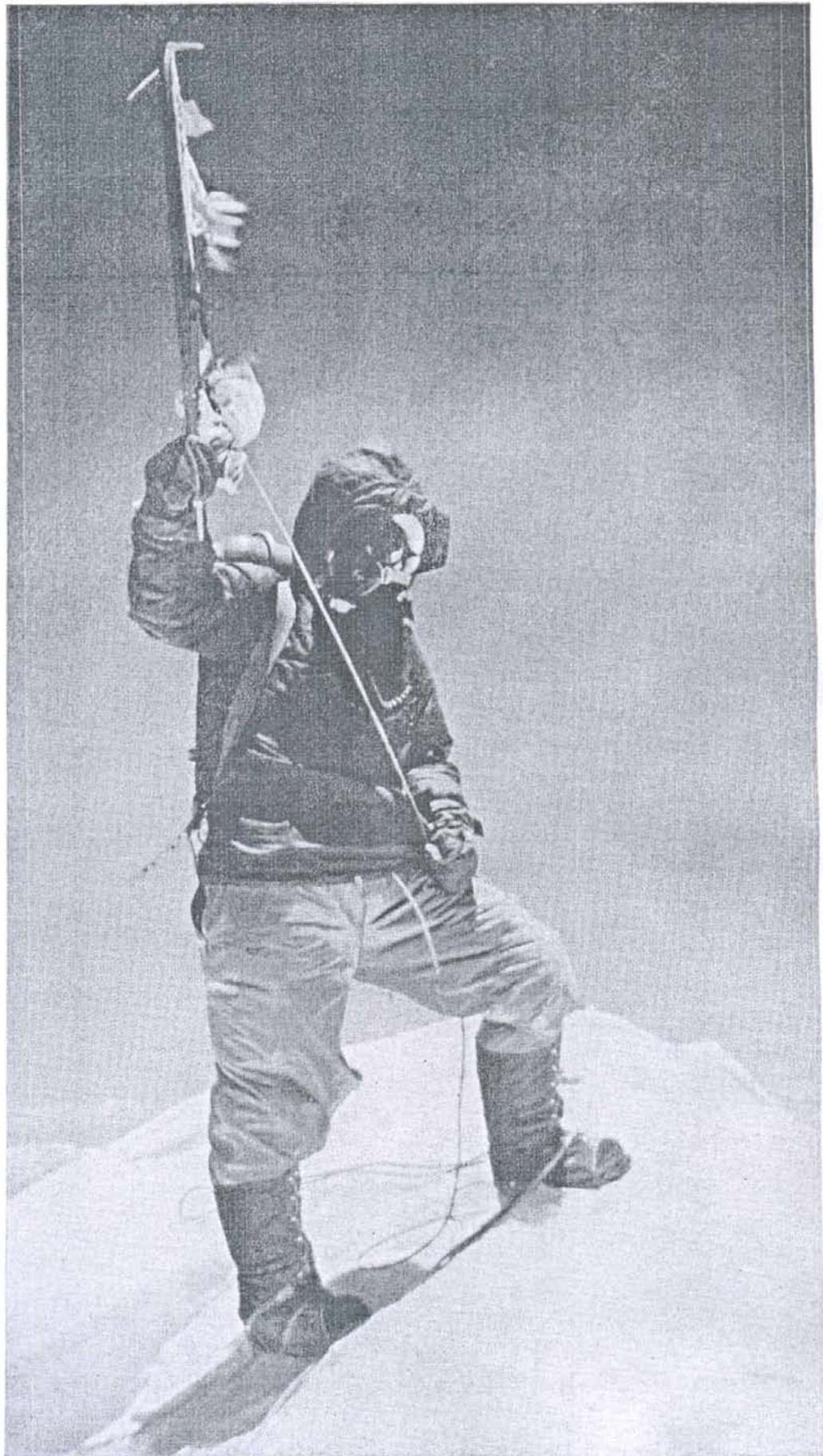




STRAIGHT AHEAD RISES SATELLITE PEAK, LHOTSE



turns breaking trail, Hillary leads here with Tenzing taking responsibility as anchor man on safety rope.



**ON TOP OF THE WORLD** Tenzing braces self against wind which sends flags of U.N., Great Britain

and Nepal fluttering wildly on ice ax handle. Rope over his left foot runs to Hillary, who took picture.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

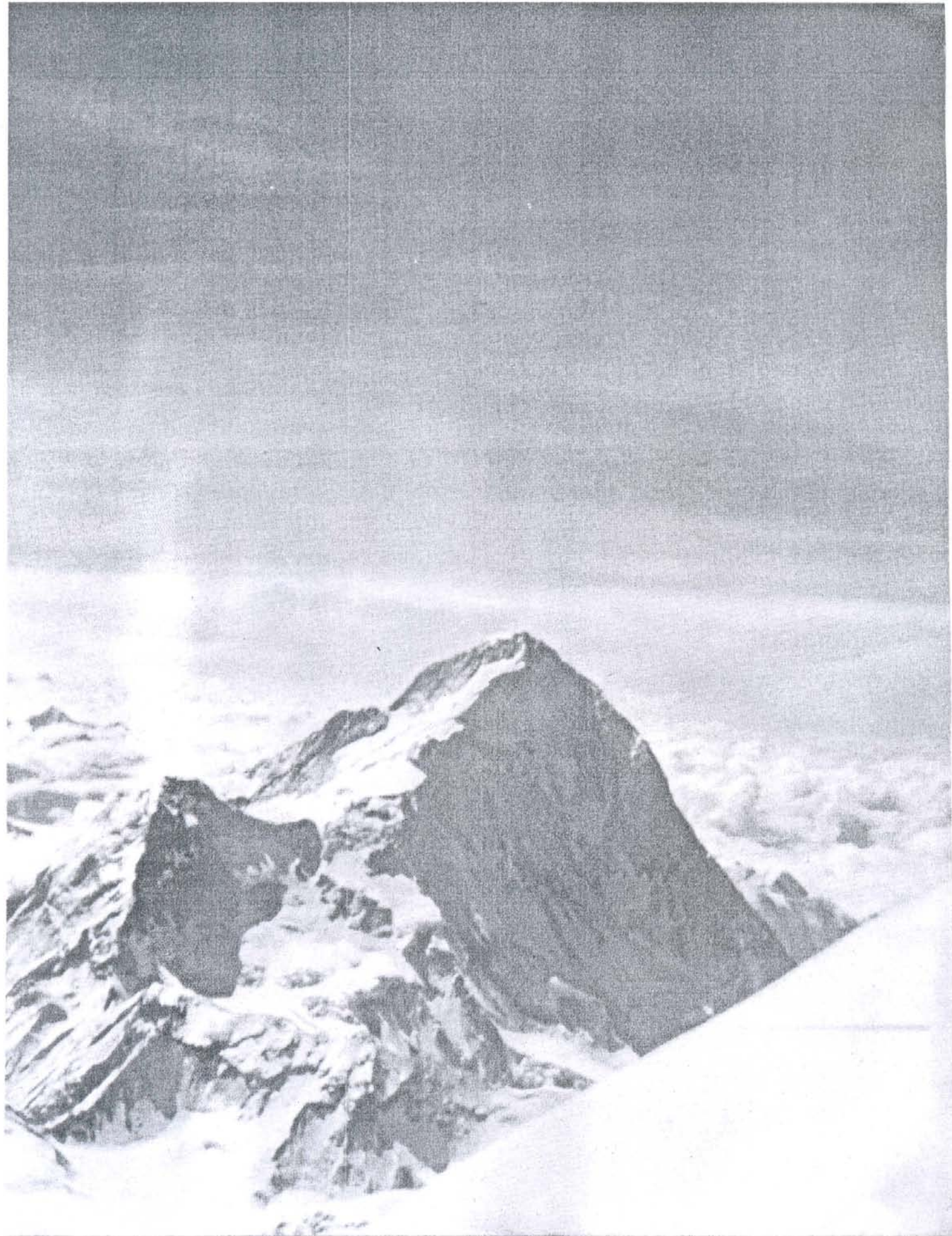




**FROM EVEREST'S PEAK** its lonely neighbors spire above a tumbled cloud layer floating at 20,000 feet. Hillary took this picture east from the summit. At

the right (*foreground*) is Makalu's 27,790-foot peak with the jagged crest of Chomo Lonzo, its 25,640-foot junior partner, rising from the same underlying





massif in the left center foreground. Far beyond them (*left background*) some 80 miles away, rise the many ice-sheathed peaks of the Kanchenjunga massif,

called the "showpiece of the Himalayas." Kanchenjunga's tallest peak (28,140) is rated by mountaineers to be technically more difficult than Everest itself.