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Everest – Great Couloir (8848m) An Italian team was successful on this route. Fausto De Stefani, who has climbed nine 8000m peaks, contracted pulmonary oedema at 8350m during the first attempt, but was safely evacuated to Base Camp after a five-day epic. His sudden illness is a new warning signal that even the most experienced high-altitude mountaineers are not safe over 7500m-8000m.

Xixabangma (8027m) A German expedition was successful, with one of their summiteers, Ottilie Dörrich (54), becoming the oldest lady to climb an 8000er. Sadly, four members of the team died after heavy snowfall in a subsequent attempt – probably in an avalanche.

Namche Barwa (7782m) A 12-man Chinese–Japanese party failed to make the first ascent of this peak. Base Camp was established on 28 September and six camps made up to 6700m. The team circumnavigated the summit of Naipun (7043m) and fixed rope up to 7200m. From there two attempts were made on the summit, failing at 7350m and 7450m in hazardous snow conditions. Hiroshi Ohnishi was swept to his death in an avalanche early on during the expedition. He had previously climbed Everest and Makalu and reached the North Pole.

Muztagh Ata (7546m) This mountain remains one of the most popular 7000ers in China. A Japanese Alpine Club party carried out barometric measurements, getting a reading of only 7300m on the summit. One is reminded of the fate of another Chinese peak, Ulugh Muztagh, which some years ago was down graded from 7724m to only 6987m . . .