



TO THE READER

You are holding a book about a trek to the North Pole that made Finnish polar expedition history. Our seven-man team skied from the Canadian coast to the geographical North Pole in two months. We truly put our all into the effort. It was the most extreme physical and mental challenge any of us had ever encountered. Skiing to the North Pole was also our dream.

With this book, we hope to share what we experienced amidst ice fields and extremely cold temperatures. Our stories from along the way tell about our feelings and thoughts as we skied northward, searching for a way through the rubble ice. The book includes infoboxes and appendices that tell about our preparations and provide background. Its large photographs introduce you to the vast Arctic ice field. Photography in the far north is also an extreme activity. Your fingers freeze while you're handling the equipment and the cold discharges the batteries; warmth inside the tent produces condensation inside the camera. Despite these challenges, I believe that the photographs convey a true sense of the trials of Arctic exploration and allow you to appreciate the uniqueness of the Arctic Ocean.

We took on an arctic challenge. Our extensive and careful preparations provided a solid foundation for reaching our goal. During our expedition, we endured hardship and were often pushed to our physical limits. Over and over again, we all wondered to ourselves how much farther our motivation would take us. Together, as a team, we eventually reached our goal and planted the Finnish flag on the geographical North Pole.

I hope that our experiences will help you on your own treks and expeditions and that our story will inspire you to face your own challenges and make your dreams come true.

I want to thank everyone who helped us to succeed and especially those who made this book possible. I want to thank the members of our expedition for their great company during the expedition and for their help in making this book. I am especially grateful to Henkku, the leader of our expedition and my friend, for providing his support for this book project.

I am deeply grateful to my family: my wife Kirsi and our children Rasmus, Reetta and Laura. Their patience was put to an unfair test many times during the preparations, the expedition and also the book project.

Nurmijärvi, 29 april 2007,
twelve months after reaching the North Pole.

Kari Poppis Suomela

