

China

WEST KUN LUN

Seilik Gulam Muztag, first ascent. A Japanese expedition comprising four climbers led by Hiroshi Onishi was successful in making the first ascent of Seilik Gulam Muztag (6691m), formerly known as Kashitashi, completing

the route attempted by an expedition in 2000, of which Onishi was a member. The Japanese mountaineers established Base Camp at 3800m on July 31 and a couple of days later Advanced Base at 4500m north west of the peak. Camp 1 was placed at 5170m near the foot of the North Ridge. By the August 11 Camp 3 had been established at 6200m on the ridge, from where several ropes were fixed up steeper snow slopes to the top of a 6400m snow dome, the highest point reached by the 2000 party. At 6:30 a.m. on the 12th all four members left Camp 3 in the dark and reached the top of the dome at 8:00 a.m. Continuing in unstable weather the climbers followed a wide snow ridge split by many small crevasses and then a final knife edge to reach the highest point a little after 3:00 p.m. The weather cleared at this point and the team was able to have fine views of the unclimbed West Peak (6650m) before making their descent.



TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Yunnan Province

HENGDUAN RANGE

Hengduan Range, Crown Mountain, possible first ascent. During the end of January 2001 I reached the top of a beautiful 5100m peak (according to my altimeter) in the north west of the Yunnan province in China. The peak can be approached from the road from Zhongdian around the last pass before coming down to Deqin. According to Chinese travel books the peak name is The Crown Mountain and it sits opposite of Mt. Baima, northeast of the road facing southwest, and therefore not very snowy on this side. The mountain is made of many small rocky peaks that give it its "crown" name. The highest of them is the one to the northwest. At the 4400m campsite is an old ruin of rock and wood that maybe belongs to yak shepherds or the road builders. We pitched our tents there, and the temperature went to -25° Celsius that night. My partner had mountain sickness for a few days, and so I went up solo and climbed all the peaks from southeast to northwest except the first big one on the southeast, which was probably first ascended by an American who lives in Kunming, Bob Moseley, who confirmed the heights. The start of the climb was easy scramble past rock fall on the ground, the last part involved one or two pitches of 5.7 at the most. A few meters to the northwest there is another lower peak, which seems to have a few rocks one on the other; the approach to the main peak from there seems hard. Therefore I assume my climb was a

first ascent. The entire climb down was easier in a 5.5 chimney. The climb takes a few hours. Not far away sits the highest peak in Yunnan, the sacred unclimbed Meili peak, which can be seen from Crown Mountain.

ALON HOD, *Israel*

SICHUAN

Jarjinjabo Range, first ascent of unnamed rock tower. Four Japanese climbers, Eiji Daigo, Yuriko Kowaka, Naoki Ohuchi, and Taizo Yoshida, made the first ascent of an unnamed granite tower in the Jarjinjabo Massif above Zhopu Pasture. This region of West Sichuan lies close to the border (Yangste River) with Tibet and approximately 65 km northeast of Batang on the Sichuan-Tibet Highway. The team established base camp on July 25 at 4050m on the Zhopu Pasture and on the 26th set up an advanced camp at ca 4700m below the tower, after making a non-glaciated approach. On the 27th they fixed the first 100 meters of the south pillar in three pitches and after two days of rain recommenced by climbing 10 pitches and bivouacking. The following day, the 31st, they completed a further three pitches to the summit and descended. The 320-meter-high wall (480 meters of climbing) gave maximum difficulties of 5.10a and A1. Although nearly 70 percent of the route followed good cracks, the team used more aid than expected due to the heavy rain.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Tibet

Gurla Mandata, ascent. Japanese climbers, Masakazu Okunda and Susumu Yamada, together with a high altitude porter, climbed this 7694m peak in Western Tibet via the Original Route up the West Ridge approached from the north. The summit, a.k.a. Naimona'nyi, was reached on September 25.



TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Yangra Kangri, attempt on a new route. The highest summit in the Ganesh Himal lies on the Nepal-Tibet border and is referred to as Yangra Kangri (in Tibet) or Ganesh I (in Nepal). The 7429m peak was climbed on October 24, 1955 from the Nepalese side by Eric Guachet, Claude Kogan, and Raymond Lambert, but since then nobody else has reached the top. In 1987 a joint expedition between The Himalayan Association of Japan and The Tibet Mountaineering Association succeeded in climbing Labuche Kang (7367m), west of Cho Oyu. In spring 1995, Mr. Cheng Tianliang, the Tibetan leader of that expedition, suggested a 10th anniversary joint expedition, the target being the north side of Yangra Kangri in 1997. As the area around the peak had not yet been opened to foreigners, I lost no time in replying that the HAJ agreed to his suggestion.

I organized a reconnaissance and at the end of September 1996, joined 45 year old Gaya,

one of the Tibetan members, in Lhasa. The northern approach planned by us was via Tingri, the north side of Shishapangma, Ma La (5234m) and the Kyirong Zangbo River (the upper stream of the Bhote Kosi River). The route would then proceed southward about 50 km along the river. On September 29 we tried to gather information in Kyirong Prefecture but were given the unhappy news that no road or trail existed on the north side of Yangra Kangri. Although from the maps we found it hard to believe, lack of time forced us to change our route to one that approached from south via the Sanji Glacier. From the prefecture (4127m) to Kyirong

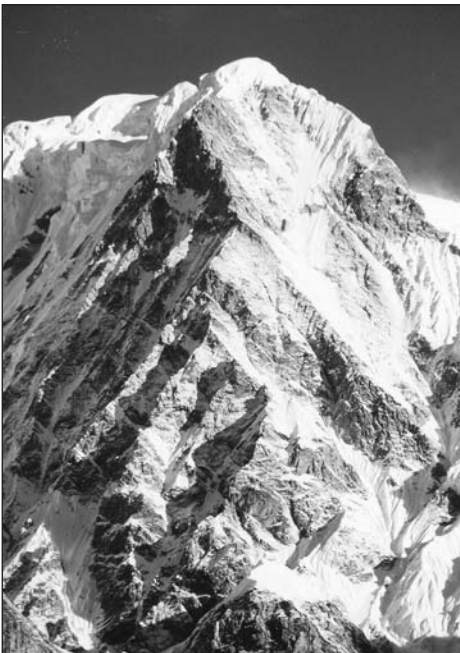


Above: Camp 4 on the ascent of Yangra Kangri. In the background is Mt. Chamar, 7177m, Nepal *Hideki Sato*.
Below: Rama glacier panorama of (left to right) Peak 6192m, Peak 6245m, Peak 6074m. *Kinichi Yamamori*

District (2795m), we had a 75km jeep ride, driving on a road made in the bottom of the river. In a few hours we had moved from desert area to forest. At 10:00 p.m. some local policemen came to us and took our passports away. Next day we visited the border police office, where they told us not to proceed. “Why?” we asked, “we have permission.” “The Chinese map is not authentic,” they replied. After an hour’s discussion, they permitted us to go, saying “We will keep your passport until you come back. Don’t take any photographs.”

Gaya and I hired four porters and left Kyirong District. We descended southward along the Kyirong Zangbo River, where many laborers were making a roadway. After a five-hour walk we reached a point (2026m) where we had to cross the river via a bamboo basket hung from a single wire rope. Shortly after, we reached Jangzon (2400m), where we stayed the night. Next day we camped early at 3480m close to the river, from where Gaya reached the Lado La (4632m). The entrance to the Sanji Glacier was obscured due to rain, and persistent bad weather meant that we were subsequently prevented from seeing the south face of Yangra Kangri. We had no alternative but to go back, arriving in Kyirong District on October 5.

The reconnaissance had given us an unexpected present. On the way we had noticed a very attractive mountain, Kabang Peak (6717m), from the Ma La, so in the autumn of 1998 I planned a second expedition to look at both this peak and Yangra Kangri. On October 26, after investigating Kabang, we reached Ruka (3050m) on the Kyirong Zangbo River. From there Yoshide Higami and Yasuo Ota ascended the Rama Pu to find the route to the foot of the northeast spur. However, they failed to reach the Pawu Glacier on the north side of Yangra Kangri because it was too hard for only two men to make any progress through marshes and bushes.



Left: Unclimbed Lampa Kangri (6668m) south ridge from Rama Glacier. Right: Yangra Kangri (7429m). The climbing route weaves through seracs on the right to the ridge, then up right on the east ridge. *Kinichi Yamamori (2)*

Our third expedition took place in the autumn of 2001. On September 15 the main party: Kinichi Yamamori (57, leader); Yoshihide Higami (57, deputy leader); Hideki Sato (53, climbing leader); Seiko Mantoku (47); Yasuji Moriyama (51); Yasuo Ota (48); Kunihiko Sato (58), and Masakatsu Tamura (59), left Lhasa and four days later reached Ruka. After finding a suitable route to base camp at 3350m in the forest the other side of the Lama Pu, and building a bridge, we moved our equipment up there on September 24 with the help of 51 local porters. We then established Camp 1 at 4400m beside a lake named Lachang Co. This was close to the start of the northeast spur.

The spur is a branch of the east ridge and itself splits into two branches at ca 6100m. On September 30 we started climbing, aiming for the easterly branch of the spur. It took two hours from Camp 1 to the end of the glacier, after which we climbed a snow face, passing to the right of a rocky tower to reach the foot of the upper face. Camp 2 (5350m) was established below a glass-shaped rock wall.

The route now became difficult. We climbed two pitches on the rock wall then followed a snow ridge, which became very thin and narrow. Above, more ridge led to an icefall. After climbing through the latter, we reached a plateau, where on October 18 we established Camp 3 at 6000m.

From here the route climbed directly up a huge snow face to the east ridge. There were many big steps and crevasses, and shortage of ropes meant that in order to extend the route we had to remove those that had been fixed lower down. On the 24th we sited Camp 4 at 6860m just below the east ridge. Four members stayed there and on the 26th climbed up the east ridge without ropes or pitons (which had all been used below) until they were forced to give up at 6900m.

Although we were unable to succeed in making the second ascent of Yangra Kangri via a new route, we were all satisfied with our expedition, on which a middle-aged team had climbed 2500m at altitude up an ambitious challenge without the help of high altitude porters.

KINICHI YAMAMORI, *The Himalayan Association of Japan*

Mt. Everest, new Mallory and Irvine discoveries, north ridge ascent, rescues. On March 20 our 2001 Mallory and Irvine Research Expedition arrived at Rongbuk Base Camp hoping we could find the camera we believed Andrew Irvine was carrying in 1924. As in 1999, we started early in the season, hopeful for less snow on the upper mountain. Our team of seven professional guides (Dave Hahn, Brent Okita, John Race, Tap Richards, Jake Norton, Andy Politz, and me as leader) was supported by 19 climbing Sherpas, team doctor Lee Meyers and historian Jochen Hemmleb. A group of climbers and trekkers joined us later, accompanied by guides Heidi Eichner, Craig John, Heather Macdonald, and Jason Tanguay. We were several weeks ahead of the many other expedition teams that season, and our climbers and Sherpas fixed the entire modern climbing route and established six camps before others caught up. This included fixing to camp 4/north col (23,200'/7070m), to Camp 5 on the north ridge (25,600'/7800m), to camp 6 (26,900'/8200m) on the North Face, through the Yellow Band, from the base of the first step to the top of the Second Step, the Third Step, and the summit pyramid.

During the last week of April our group conducted two major searches, with a total of seven days spent combing the area between 26,000 and 28,000 feet on the North Face, including a four-day stint at Camp 6 by Richards, Hahn, and Politz. Two days later Okita and Norton climbed the true North Ridge above Camp 5 pioneered by the British, probably for the first time since 1938, searching all the way to the First Step. New discoveries included the British

1922 ABC and Camp 6 sites from 1924 and 1933, as well as the 1960 and 1975 Chinese Camp 6 sites and 1960 Chinese Camp 7. Our first summit bid in early May ended with the successful carry-out rescue from below ABC of two desperately ill Chinese glacial research students unconscious with cerebral edema. A second summit attempt was thwarted by deep snow in the Yellow Band and a third attempt was turned back by bad weather from Camp 5. Finally, on May 19, our non-guided climbers Mike Otis and Terry LaFrance reached the top along with Sherpas Kami, Mingma Ongel, Lhapka Nuru, and Danuru. They climbed the modern north side route from Camp 6, and were the first to the summit in 2001 from either side of Everest.

Our final high altitude search and summit bid saw Hahn, Richards, Tanguay, and Politz give up their summit climb on a perfect day to rescue five climbers stranded overnight near the top and unable to descend: three from Mushroom Rock (28,120'/8570 m) and two from the Third Step (28,500'/8690m). The irony of this did not escape us, as our team had gone looking for evidence of climbers long dead and found instead climbers who were alive, albeit barely. This epic rescue, one of the highest in history, resulted in the AAC's David Sowles award being presented to these four climbers, along with Lobsang and Phurba Sherpa, for their amazing efforts. Our final discovery came not on the slopes of Mt. Everest, but in Beijing, China. In late August 2001, Simonson and Hemmleb interviewed climbers from the 1960 and 1975 Chinese Everest expeditions and came away with previously unrecorded information regarding their climbs and discoveries they had made, including the 1960 sighting of a body in a location completely different from the Mallory site. This could only have been Andrew Irvine. We now conclude that Wang Hongbao sighted the remains of Mallory in 1975. There is still work to be done by future detectives on Everest!

ERIC SIMONSON, AAC

Everest, record day and first snowboard descent. May 23 saw the record for the number of climbers reaching the summit in a single day completely smashed. Before last year the record stood at 40, these ascents taking place on the May 10, 1993. On May 23, 2001 47 people from the Nepalese side alone reached the top. When combined with the 42 gaining the summit from the north, this gives a total of 89. Amongst the summiteers from the north that day was the young Frenchman, Marco Siffredi.

The previous night Siffredi had celebrated his 22nd birthday at the 8300m Camp 4 and prior to that had ascended eight times to the North Col (7000m) and several times to Camp 2 (7500m) to aid his acclimatisation. On the 23rd he left Camp 4 at 2:00 a.m. and only four hours and 15 minutes later was sitting on the summit, waiting for his Sherpa, Lobsang Temba, to bring up his snowboard. At 8:00 a.m. he had abandoned his oxygen equipment and was making his first turns on the summit ridge, heading for the Great (Norton) Couloir, the most logical choice for a descent and the scene of previous attempts by skiers such as the great Davo Karnicar from Slovenia.

In the first difficult 150 meters (45 degrees with rocks) one of his bindings broke in the cold. Fortunately, with the help of Lobsang, who was carrying a pair of pliers, he was able to repair it and continue. At 8300m he reached the rock barrier, which he anticipated might require a rappel. However, with so much snow on the mountain after the earlier bad weather, he was able to continue surfing unaided. He descended the couloir (ca 40 degrees) to the seracs near the base, then cut right to reach the North Col. After a rest he surfed the last 600 meters to advanced base on the Rongbuk in a total time of a little over two-and-a-half hours. This was

not only the first complete snowboard descent of Everest, but the first complete descent of the Tibetan side of the mountain by either ski or surf.

MOUNTAIN INFO, *High Mountain Sports*

Everest, first descent by paraglider. First to reach the summit on May 22 were Bertrand “Zébulon” Roche and his wife Clair Bernier-Roche. This was the second time for Bertrand on the summit of Everest. In October 1990, when he was 17 years old, he became the youngest non-Nepalese to climb Everest, a record which still stands to this day. He reached the top with his father, the guide Jean-Noël Roche, the ascent also being the first time a father and son had reached the summit together. Now he is a guide and with his wife owns a paragliding school, where she is an instructor (and also three-times World female champion). They brought their tandem paraglider to the top and when they soared overhead to descend from the summit directly to advanced base at 6400m in just 10 minutes, people below were amazed and fascinated by this spectacular sight. It was the first complete descent of Everest by paraglider.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, East (Fantasy) Ridge attempt. The only expedition that did not attempt the standard Everest routes on the north and south side during the spring was a team of 10 Indian climbers and five Nepalese Sherpas led by Santosh Yadav, the first woman to climb Everest twice. This expedition made a brave attempt on the unclimbed east ridge, rising steeply from the middle of the east (Kangshung) face. The only other team to have tried this line was a Japanese expedition in 1991, which abandoned its attempt at 6400m because of the extremely difficult nature of the terrain and the dangerous avalanche potential. Yadav took large quantities of rope and equipment, and before going to the mountain said “I am 100 percent sure about my climbers and my equipment.” She could determine these factors but not the constant snow fall. With not a single full day of good weather throughout the expedition period from April 12 to May 24, and white out conditions even at base camp, with frequent avalanches and very few safe sites to establish camps beyond the team’s high point of 6900m, the expedition abandoned its attempt and went home, reportedly leaving all the ropes in place. Yadav said she was determined to try this route again.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

Everest, post monsoon attempts. In complete contrast to the spring, only three expeditions attempted Everest from the north. All were unsuccessful and no one managed to climb higher than 7800m. Two teams were on the standard North Col-north ridge route, including the American double amputee, Ed Hommer. The third expedition was attempting the rarely-climbed east (Kangshung) face. Five climbing members from Hungary under the leadership of David Klein were attempting the 1988 Anglo-American Route. Their maximum altitude was just 6300m, which they reached after more than four weeks on the mountain. They finally abandoned their attempt after many days of heavy snowfall followed by days of dangerous avalanches down the extremely steep face. They would climb a little, snow would fall heavily, they would retreat to a safe camp, wait two days for the avalanches to stop, go back up again and then the same pattern

would repeat itself. Luckily none were killed or even seriously injured, though Klein was briefly knocked unconscious by stone fall and two other members were carried inside their tent 250 meters down to the bottom of the face, when an avalanche struck their camp.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY

For information on Everest from the south side, see the Nepal reports.

Shishapangma, southwest face, fast solo ascent and soloing/single-push history. It is easy to lose perspective in the Himalaya. Base camps bulge with expeditions, routes are choked with climbers and the once-pervasive feeling of isolation can be replaced by claustrophobia. On May 23, 2001 I guided clients to the summit of Everest. Eighty nine folks reached the top that day, setting a new record. Although I was among the first 1,100 individuals to summit that peak, it seemed like I was crammed in a very well-refrigerated subway car.

After that experience, I decided to seek solitude in one of the most beautiful places in the Himalaya. On September 9, 2001, I crossed the border into Tibet and headed back to Shishapangma, arriving at base camp in the midst of a stormy day. I had been here before, in October 1999, after climbing Cho Oyu, when on the first morning at base camp an avalanche had roared down the face, claiming the lives of Dave Bridges and Alex Lowe. For the next week high winds and snowstorms had torn at the peak. With little hope of conditions improving, our small expedition had packed up and headed back to Nepal. In 2001 my hope was to climb the Polish-Swiss route, which was in bad shape (and apparently had been for a few years). The three expeditions lining up on the British Route were the only other teams on the face.

I turned my attention to a variation of the British descent route. Carrying a light pack, I began the climb at 10:50 a.m. on September 19. Unroped and 1,000 feet up the icy 60-degree face, I broke an ice axe, shearing the bolt and rendering it useless. Nine rappels later I was on terrain gentle enough to downclimb.

On September 23, I set off again for the summit. The poor conditions I encountered on my first attempt persuaded me to head for the British Route, where I could take advantage of fixed ropes to aid my descent. I left ABC (19,350') at 3:40 p.m. After climbing 7,000 vertical feet on 50- to 70-degree névé, rock, and ice, I reached the main summit at 9 a.m. on the 24th. The descent would prove to be more exciting



The south face of Shishapangma. At least a half-dozen routes ascend most of the visible features. *Chris Warner*

than the ascent. A fog bank rolled up to the face, light snow began to fall, and far above the security of the fixed ropes I was caught in a total whiteout. I criss-crossed the 50- to 60-degree couloir seven times before I finally found the ropes, then continued the interminable descent by rappelling for almost 3,500 feet. I returned to my tent at ABC at 10 p.m., 34 hours after beginning the climb.

The southwest face of Shishapangma is quite important within the development of non-stop ascents of 8000m peaks. In 1990 Loretan and Troillet climbed a new route to the central summit in 16 hours. Kurtyka, who was climbing with them, reached the central summit in 22 hours. Kurtyka bivouacked on his descent, while the Swiss returned to the base of the mountain in one push.

In 1993 Wielicki soloed a new route to the right of the British route, reaching the summit in one day. Earlier, he recorded a similar single push ascent on Broad Peak by the Normal route (in 1984 he climbed from base camp to the summit in 16 hours)

Last September Kobi Reichen of Switzerland set off for the summit at mid-day on the 23rd. He stopped at Camp 1 for four to five hours, where he joined two friends to continue up to the summit. They all reached the top about one hour before I did. Reichen and I both climbed via the British route, both having the fastest times yet on that route. I was about 40 minutes quicker, but Kobi was obviously stronger, as he actually moved much faster than I.

As far as I know, this ascent is the first American solo of an 8,000-meter peak. In 1990 George Lowe climbed from Camp 2 to the summit of Dhaulagiri solo. About two days after my ascent of Shishapangma Marty Schmidt soloed the regular route on Cho Oyu in 13 hours (in 1996 Russel Brice from New Zealand soloed Cho Oyu in 11 hours).

In the mid 1980s a handful of climbers brought the single push style from the Alps to the 8000-meter peaks. Since then folks like Wielicki, Troillet, Chamoux, Babu Chirri, and Kammerlander have been literally running up peaks. Does this diminish the accomplishment of the clients I've guided to the summit of Everest? Absolutely not. Each person has their own limits. And each person should exercise their own tolerance for risk. If I didn't go out and run up the southwest Face of Shishapangma, I'd always be wondering what my limits are.

CHRIS WARNER, AAC

Nojin Kangsang, probable first ascent of west ridge. On August 15 Aumi Nozawai, Shinichi Miyagawa, and Masao Saito from a six-member Himalayan Association of Japan expedition led by 61-year-old Kunimitsu Sakai, made the probable fourth ascent of 7191m Nojin Kangsang via the west ridge. The team established base camp on July 29 at 4800m on the west flank of the mountain and then placed three camps on the west ridge. The west ridge flanks the north side of the Togolung Glacier and rises directly to the summit.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Nojin Kangsang, attempt from the north. During August 2000 the Japanese climber, Tadakiyo Sakahara, made the first ascent of the East Ridge as reported in *AAJ* 2001. The 56-year-old mountaineer returned in 2001 and set up base camp once again on the eastern side of the peak. He then moved around to the north, where he tried to open a new route. However, although he succeeded in making the first ascent of Gama I (6484m) en route, he was unable to continue on to the summit of Nojin Kangsang.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*



Looking northwest at the Nonjin Tanglha massif. The left summit is West Peak, 7126m. Central Peak is 7117m. The climbing route ascends directly to the Central Peak from slightly left of center. *Jon Otto*

Nonjin Tanglha Central Peak, ascent. Keith Affleck (UK), Kate Brown (Australia), and Liz Carr, Dan Mazur, and I (all US) traveled overland from Kathmandu to Lhasa. There, we met up with two Tibetan climbing assistants, Nwang and Penba, who were students of the Tibetan Mountaineering Association's High-Altitude Training School. Our objective was the 7177m central peak of Nonjin Tanglha (a.k.a. Nyenchen Tanglha, Nyainqe Tanglha, Nianqing Tanggula: West Peak, 7126m: 91°E, 30°N). The appeal of a 7000m peak in Tibet is that most have never been climbed. Nonjin Tanglha only has a handful of successful summiteers. We would be the first team in two years to attempt the central peak and the only one in spring 2001. If successful, we would be the first climbers from our own countries to summit.

Obscure to most in the West, the Nonjin Tanglha mountain range rolls through the heart of Tibet just north of the Himalaya near the capital, Lhasa. This crown-like cluster of searing summits rises sharply from the shores of heavenly Lake Nam-tso. The local Tibetan herders bestow this monolithic white landmark with its edifying name, "God of the Grasslands."

We established base camp on March 28 at the mouth of Banuco valley (4800m). The rivers were still frozen thick with ice, and vast, desolate rolling hills stretched endlessly. Inevitably, large numbers of herders (children, women, and men) emerged from nowhere, their small compounds of mud houses tucked over ridges just out of view. Tibetans threw paper offerings into the wind at a distant hermitage silhouetted against the dawn sky.

Through several shuttles of gear we set up ABC (5250m) among grazing yaks deep within Banuco valley at the base of a 6000m sheer-walled mini peak that masks the south-southwest face of Central Peak. Finding the route to C1 took several days and, unfortunately, we did not discover the most efficient route until making our descent. The best way is to walk up the valley west of the mini peak, then continue up steep, grassy slopes to a short-lived rocky moraine. From there walk back in an easterly direction up a small ravine to the glacier. C1 (5950m) lies in the saddle between the mini peak and the main face. The entire team was in C1 on April 11



Along the summit ridge of Nonjin Tanglha's Central Peak. *Jon Otto*

having reached this point via a much more arduous traverse of the mini peak.

Most of the team fixed rope to C2 (6500m), from where we thought it would be a straight shot to the summit. Dan and I explored a route we had heard as a possibility but it led into a maze of crevasses. We descended by hugging the left or west side of the slope, skirting along cliffs that dropped for several thousand feet. Time was running out and bad weather arrived (these peaks have an intensely local and volatile weather system due to their proximity to Lake Nam-tso). We hunkered down in our Ozark tents.

On April 15, our last possible summit day, Kate, Liz, Nwang, Penba, Dan, and I headed out in uncertain conditions. Once beyond our previous high-point, Penba and I roped together and took the lead to find the route and place wands, crossing a large flat plateau of wind-blown snow dunes at 6,850m. This ended abruptly at a short 60- to 70-degree snow wall and the last section of fair slope below the summit. The rest of

the team popped up at the far end of the plateau. Kate and Nwang continued slowly across the snow dunes while Dan and Liz had to descend. Keith was on the radio. He had left C1 and had only made it half way to ABC when he could not move anymore. A rescue was required. When Dan and Liz reached Keith, he was blue in the face and looked half dead due to dehydration and AMS.

Keith's predicament was not known to the summit climbers, who were waiting in all-encompassing cloud. It soon became obvious that, although it was almost a whiteout, the weather was stable. Penba and I continued upward, reaching the summit with our last wand. Penba became the first Tibetan ever to summit Nonjin Tanglha and I the first American. On our descent we met Kate and Nwang just above the snow wall. Nwang turned around just 30 meters below the summit. Kate had made that heart-wrenching choice all climbers come to face sooner or later: If I make the summit I might not have the energy to go back down. Will I? What now?

I meticulously belayed Kate down, one rope length at a time, as she exhaustedly skirted the edges of cliffs, safely arriving at C2 by midnight. Dan, Liz, and Keith spent the night bivouacked in a storm above ABC. The two Tibetans hastily descended, reaching ABC by nightfall,

having cleared a huge pack of gear off the mountain. As we reached base camp the following day our jeeps were waiting to drive us back to Lhasa.

JON OTTO, AAC

Editor's Note: The 7126m West Peak was first climbed in 1986 by three members of Mario Kusunushi's Japanese Expedition via the west ridge. The first ascent of the Central Peak took place in 1989 when Wolfgang Axt and five other Austrians reached the summit via the south-southwest Ridge. This route appears to have been repeated in 1992 by a team from Beijing University. The 2001 ascent is probably the third.

Yarlha Shampo, attempt. This 6635m peak, which lies 80 km southeast of Lhasa at 28° 45' N, 91° 50' E, was attempted for the first time last year. Yoshiki Ito and 17 members of the Yamagata Mountaineering Association met with bad weather (particularly thunderstorms) and were forced to abandon their attempt at 6100m.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*



The Kangri Garpo Range, showing the Lhagu Glacier from the village of Lhagu. The peaks are unnamed and between 6100m and 6500m high. *John Nankervis*

Kangri Garpo Range, exploration. During October and November 2001, New Zealanders John Wild, Wilf Dickerson, Nick Shearer, Colin Monteath and I (leader), accompanied by trekkers Jos Lang and Betty Monteath went on a recce expedition to the remote and stunningly beautiful Kangri Garpo range, three days' drive southeast of Lhasa largely on the southern Sichuan-Tibet Highway. From the junction at Rawu the last section of the road passes beneath the partially restored monastery of Shugden Gompa and continues to the village of Lhagu. Yaks and ponies



Unnamed peaks in the Kangri Garpo Range. Top: Skiing on the southeastern end of the Lhagu Glacier. The left peak is 6127m and the right peak is 6421m. Bottom: the highest peaks are circa 6500m. *John Nankervis (2)*

were used for transport to a base camp, one day's walk above Lhagu. No high summits were reached. However, what was probably the first traverse of the 30 km long Lhagu glacier to its expansive upper névé was undertaken on skis, an unclimbed subsidiary bump of 5,750 metres was ascended on skis and a legion of 6,000-to 6,600-meter peaks were seen and committed to photographic memory. Colin Monteath was lucky to survive an unroped 20-meter fall into a narrow crevasse high on the Lhagu névé while skiing. Characteristically he continued professional photography from its icy bowels. The group also visited the Ata Kang La area where the Tibetan plateau topples steeply over into the jungles of India. There was clear cold autumn weather for much of the period but unfortunately unsettled spells with wind and light snow came



Lhagu villagers on tent-inspection duty in the Kangri Garpo. *John Nankervis*

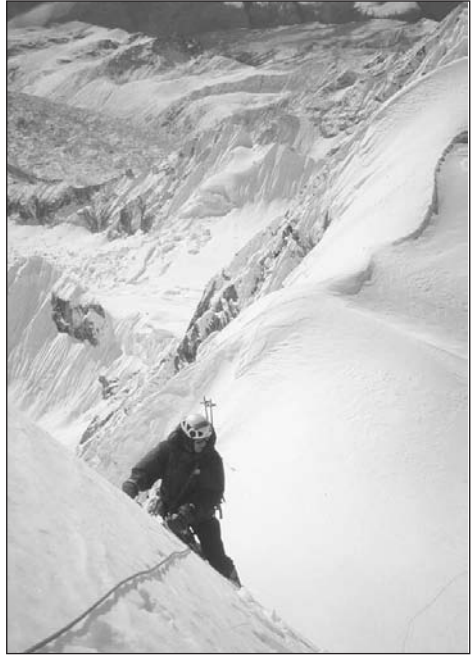
at critical periods for climbing. The 250 km long Kangri Garpo range is just north of the Burma and Assam borders and east of the big bend in the Tsangpo river and Namcha Barwa, the farthest outpost of the Himalaya. No major peaks in the range have been climbed. The expedition was supported generously by a Shipton/Tilman grant and a Mount Everest Foundation grant (UK).

JOHN NANKERVIS, *New Zealand Alpine Club*

Editor's note: The Japanese explorer, Tamotsu Nakamura, had trekked through this region of the Kangri Garpo several years previously. In October and November 2001, two elderly Japanese mountaineers from the Silver Turtle Group also visited the Lhagu Glacier. They then moved south and made an extensive reconnaissance of the southeastern part of the range crossing the 4610m Ata Kang La to the Ata Glacier.

Kula Kangri Central and East, first ascents. In spring a joint expedition comprising 11 Japanese (leader, Yoshitsugu Deriha) and eight Tibetans (leader, Tsenden Jigmy) made the first ascents of Kula Kangri Central (Kula Kangri II; 7418m) and Kula Kangri East (Kula Kangri III; 7381m), both of which lie along the ridge running east from the Main (7538m) summit. These were wrongly reported in *AAJ* 1998 as having been climbed by a Spanish expedition in May 1997. The Spanish climbed only the main summit, noting the existence of two unclimbed subsidiary summits to the east.

The expedition set up base camp on April 1 in the village of Monda at 4250m, then used 85 horses and donkeys to transport equipment to an advanced base at 5400m. Progressing up the moraines on the west bank of the glacier, the team established Camp 1 at 5900m in the upper cwm below the mountain. A route was opened through a large icefall to reach the ridge connecting the east summit with Karjiang (7221m), and Camp 2 placed at 6350m. One aluminium ladder and 1,500 meters of rope were fixed on this section. The climbers then slanted up the northwestern flank of Kula Kangri East, fixing another 1,500 meters of rope. By the 30th they



The Karjiang region at the border of Tibet and Bhutan. Top left: Karjiang's west face, 7221m. The attempt did not quite reach the top of the shaded ridge on the right. Top right: Making the first ascent of Kangmi Kangri, 6412m. Bottom left: On the ascent of Taptol Kangri, 6824m. Bottom right: Taptol Kangri's north face. The route follows the sunny snowfields to the upper ridge just left of the skyline cliff band. *Dutch Karjiang Expedition*

had established Camp 3 at ca 7100m on the west side of the east summit, from where two Tibetans and two Japanese reached the previously unclimbed central summit on May 2. Two days later three Tibetans and six Japanese reached the east summit. On May 5 another group left Camp 3 intending to traverse the central summit and continue along the ridge to Kulu Kangri Main. However, due to poor weather and bad visibility they turned back. The following day they made a second attempt and reached the central summit but the weather turned bad again, so they retreated. In total 17 climbers made successful summit bids.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

Karjiang attempt, Taptol Kangri and Kangmi Kangri first ascents. During the post monsoon season Rudolf van Aken, Pepijn Bink, Court Haegens, Willem Horstmann, Rein-Jan Koolwijk, and I attempted the first ascent of Karjiang South (7221m), the highest and most impressive summit of the Karjiang Group, situated a few kilometers northeast of Kula Kangri (7554m). We established base camp on September 20 at an altitude of ca 4950m to the north of the group. The only photographs of Karjiang in our possession were from the west but we had one excellent satellite image that promised an encouraging possibility from the northeast. We therefore decided first to go around to the east side.

Advanced base was set up on September 24 and the next day Horstmann and I reached a ca 5800m col, from where we were probably the first human beings to see the impressive northeast face of Karjiang. It looked at least 800 meters in height and even steeper and more difficult than the south face of Chacaraju in Peru. It also looked very dangerous, so we decided to skip an attempt from this side. Before retreating, Haegens made probably the first ascent of Pt 5881m. He was later followed by the rest of the team. Haegens named the peak Rognon of Good Hope. On September 30 Van Aken, Haegens, Horstmann, and I made an attempt on the beautiful Pt 6412m via its west face. Climbing 60-degree ice, we reached a height of ca 6150m, but decided to retreat due to the lateness of the hour.

We then went around to the opposite side of the mountain to make an attempt on the west face of Karjiang. In 1986 a Japanese team climbed the north summit (Karjiang II; 7216m) by its northwest ridge. They called this summit the Central Summit and Karjiang I (7221m) the South Summit. To us Karjiang I looked a lot more than five meters higher than II, especially when seen from the northeast, where Karjiang II looks like a fore-summit.

On October 4 we established another advanced base at 5700m, ca 45 minutes walk below that used by the Japanese expedition, which visited the area in the spring (see above). Unfortunately, it appeared that despite the use of porters, the Japanese had left trash on the way to their advanced base and at the site itself.

The next day Haegens and I fixed 100 meters of static in order to protect a dangerous part in the icefall. It was the only length of rope fixed during the whole expedition and was taken down at the end of the trip. We set up Camp I at ca 6300m close to the bottom of the Karjiang's west face, just below the col between Karjiang and Kula East. After a rest day Van Aken, Haegens, Horstmann, and I made an attempt on the west face. At about 6550m we caused a slab avalanche more than 25 meters wide. It fell 200 meters to the bottom of the face. No one was hurt, but as we expected the whole face to be in the same unstable condition, we withdrew, rappelling the 55- to 60-degree face with the help of snow-anchors and Abalakov threads. The next day we explored the heavily corniced south ridge but concluded it was too dangerous under the present conditions.



Top: Kangmi Kangri. Middle: descending Kula III. Bottom: Karjiang (left) and Kula III (right). *Dutch Karjiang Expedition*

A decision was now made to attempt Kula East (7381m), which looked a far easier proposition. On October 13 we all made a summit attempt from a high camp at 6700m. Low temperatures (-25°C) and a very strong wind (estimated at Force Nine) forced us to retreat from 7110m. Cold temperatures and strong winds proved a problem throughout most of the expedition.

On the 19th Bink, Horstmann, Koolwijk, and I made the first ascent of Pt 6824m, climbing this beautiful pyramid via its north face. The previous day we had spent a long day ascending from base camp via a steep snow ridge to a camp below the face at 6200m. The summit day was again very cold (-24°C). We left camp at 7:45 a.m. The 500-meter-high face was impressive but not particularly difficult (50 degrees with a few short sections of 55 degrees). We arrived on the west ridge at 6700m and from there climbed for another one-and-a-half hours to the summit by a nice snow crest with one steep section at a cornice. The east top, which we reached at 1:37 p.m., proved slightly higher. We graded the route Alpine D and after subsequent discussions with local people, named the peak Taptol Kangri.

In the meantime Van Aken and Haegens put a camp at ca 6100m on the northeast glacier of Karjiang, just below the south-southwest ridge of Pt 6412m. The following day, the 21st, they climbed the narrow snow ridge to the summit (The steep west face was too dangerous because

of heavy snowfall the day before). After a large rimaye they climbed a 55-degree ice face to the ridge. Following the crest, they had to climb sections of unstable snow up to 65 degrees on the west flank before reaching the summit at 2:45 p.m. They christened the peak Kangmi Kangri, which means Yeti snow mountain, and also rated the route Alpine D. More information can be found at www.geocities.com/karjiang.

HAROEN SCHIJF, *Nederlandse Klim-en Bergsport Vereniging (NKBV)*, the Netherlands

Tibet, tips on organizing a climbing trip. All peaks over 5,500 meters in Tibet officially require a climbing permit, which is issued by the Chinese Tibetan Mountaineering Association. CTMA is the government organization authorized to oversee mountaineering activities in Tibet. In addition to your climbing permit, CTMA also supplies you with logistical support up to base camp. This includes transportation, liaison officer, lodging and yaks, among others. You pay a fee for all these services in addition to the permit. You cannot simply buy the climbing permit and go to the mountain on your own.

When arranging your climb, your team can apply directly to the CTMA or through an agency that specializes in running climbs to the Himalaya. Dealing directly with the CTMA can be laborious, time consuming, confusing, and often more expensive than going through an agency. These agencies have price contracts with the CTMA, have worked with them for years, and are familiar with the CTMA's exact services, quality of services, and working procedures. Furthermore, an agency can organize every other crucial part of a climb from base camp food, cooks, and equipment to high-altitude climbing assistants (Sherpas), tents, and more—many essential services the CTMA does not even offer.

There are companies that work directly with the CTMA in organizing climbs to the Tibetan Himalaya. A handful are Nepalese agencies based out of Kathmandu. Two North American companies, Himalaya Incorporated (Seattle, WA) and my own BlueSheep Adventures (Bellingham, WA), cater to climbers from around the world. BlueSheep specializes in organizing expeditions to mountains in Tibet and China only. Both companies concentrate on high-quality, inexpensive climbs. They cater to pre-organized teams that only require logistical support to individuals that are looking for a fully supported expedition. They also actively support the use of Tibetans on the mountain as high-altitude climbing assistants, cooks, and porters—work traditionally done by Nepalese Sherpas—as a way to assist poor families in Tibet.

If you work directly with an agency in Asia, consider the Nepalese companies Asian Trekking or Global Expeditions. In Lhasa, a good company that offers trekking, though not climbing services, is Windhorse Adventures; the manager, Jampa, speaks excellent English. Contacts: Jampa_W@hotmail.com or Wha@public.ls.xz.cn; (tel.) + 86-891-6833009; (fax) + 86-891-6836793. Himalaya Incorporated can be reached at: (206) 329-4107; himalayainc@earthlink.net; www.Himalayaclimb.com. My company: Bluesheeptravel.com; 703-593-4799; jotto@bluesheeptravel.com.

You can contact the CTMA directly at East Lingo Rd. #10 Lhasa, Tibet 850000, China; (tel.) + 86-891-6333720; (fax) + 86-891-6336366; (e-mail) ctma@public.ls.xz.cn.

Culturally-oriented maps to most of Tibet can be found at www.tibetmap.com. The Department of Defense 1:500,000-scale TPC H-10A and H-10B maps cover most of Tibet with 1,000-foot contour intervals. Order from: MapLink, (805) 692-6777, www.maplink.com; or Omni Resources, (800) 742-2677, www.omnimap.com.

No matter whom you go through, make sure to verify exactly what is included in the price. Inquire in detail about quality and type of base camp and high-altitude equipment and food; extra potential fees and over-use yak fees; climbing ability, quality, and nationality of the climbing staff (Sherpas), and cooks. You will probably have many other concerns as well. Make sure you get all your questions answered in a satisfactory and clear way.

JON OTTO, AAC, *BlueSheep Adventure*

Southeast Asia

KOREA

Towuangseong Falls, Korean ice climbing overview. For climbers in the Seoul area, the usual place to practice rock-climbing is Insu Peak on Bukhan Mountain. No one is exactly sure when the sport of ice-climbing was introduced to Korea, but long-time members of the Corean Alpine Club first ice-climbed in Cheonbuldong Valley located at Mt. Sorak some time during the early sixties. And to help the program develop, the Corean Alpine Club sent some of its youngest members to study at the Ecole Nationale de Ski et d'Alpinisme in Chamonix, France in the early seventies. After learning the more advanced mountaineering skills and techniques used by Europeans, this new and younger generation of climbers helped the Korean ice-climbing scene get on the right track.



The first Korean protégés of the French alpine school have become the benchmark to which all Korean climbers aspire. They pioneered the way for all Korean climbing enthusiasts by venturing out on Korea's first-ever expeditions to the hard "blue" ice of the Himalayan, Eastern European, and North American ranges. Their experiences, knowledge, and techniques learned and practiced on these and other ranges are what have made it possible for Korea's greatest alpinists to accomplish what they have accomplished today.

Korean ice-climbing does not get into full swing until the latter part of December and lasts into February. Each region has its own area of ice-climbing falls. The waterfalls nearest to Seoul include Gucheon-un Falls in Mt. Bukhan, Hwaeryong-gol Falls at Mt. Dobong, Chun-gong Falls at Mt. Sapae, and Eullyu Falls at Mt. Surak. The one most frequented by climbers in the Seoul area is Gugok Falls at Mt. Bonghwa located in the Gangwon Province. Gugok Falls is most popular because it freezes quicker than any of the falls in the Seoul vicinity due to its location on the cooler and shadier western side of Mt. Bonghwa. Gugok Falls stands 70 meters high with an incline ranging from 60 to 70 degrees, making it an excellent practicing ground for scaling Korea's largest and most famous waterfall, Towuangseong Falls.

Towuangseong Falls, which means "Giant Earth Fortress," is located in Sorak-dong at the entrance to the Mt. Sorak National Park, is the main focus of interest among Korean ice-climbers. It is a Canadian Grade V and is the longest flowing icfall in East Asia. Its formidable height and daring grade present a thrilling opportunity and challenge that cannot be passed up and has become the dream of virtually every Korean ice-climber since the 1970s.

Several ice climbers have lost their lives attempting to reach the top of the falls until Byeong-min Song and Yeong-bae Bak of the Crony Alpine Club finally conquered it in 1977. They spent no less than three days and two nights to successfully complete the 350-meter ascent. But today, with the progress we've made in equipment and technique, the climb, which originally took three days, has been made in as little as an hour by some climbers.

Every winter on January 27, hordes of Korean ice climbers bust loose to show their stuff at the annual Snow Flower Festival in Towuangseong Valley. The record for the fastest solo attempt up the icefall was made in just 50 minutes by Hee-yoon Kang in 1993. The second fastest solo ascent was one hour and twenty minutes by Hak-jae Yoo in 1988. Korea's top three ice climbers today are Hak-jae Yoo, Jeong-seong Gwan, and Yong-gi Kim.

And as I finish writing this now, I can envision the ice-crazed Koreans who migrate each year to Towuangseong Falls. I can hear the whipping and chopping of ice axes, the front-pointing and squeaks of steel on blue ice, and the echoes of falling shrapnel of ice. I can hear the panting, the gritting, and the grunting. I can feel the moist heat of my body's steam struggle to escape through my clothing only to die and evaporate into the freezing air. I can feel the exhilaration of the panic, the challenge, and the accomplishment of each move all wadded up into one ball of satisfaction and thought. And I can imagine how quiet, calm, and peaceful Towuangseong Falls must appear to a very distant onlooker, a calm and cool winter stairway of frozen water connecting the heavens to the earth.

SUNG-DAE CHO (TRANSLATED BY PETER JENSEN-CHOI), *Corean Alpine Club*



Two views of Towuangseong Falls, Korea's premier ice climbing destination. *Jae-sik Son (2)*

LAOS

Paa Daeng Tower, Vang Vieng, new limestone climbs. In November 1999 Kirsten Kremer and I became only the second party to climb in the southeast Asian republic of Laos, when we put up a new route on the overhanging limestone wall of Paa Daeng or The Red Cliff. Paa Daeng is situated in full view of the rapidly expanding village of Vang Vieng, itself ca 150 kilometers north of the capital, Vientiane. We first spent two days cutting a way up third and fourth class vertical jungle terrain, keeping a careful eye on the local cobras and pit vipers, and avoiding a fire ant colony near the top. We reached the base of the main wall and found to our amazement it was a very steep cave, abounding with amazing pocket and tufa features. We had both spent many months climbing the bolted routes in Thailand and always wondered if there was similar terrain in Laos, which could be protected by traditional gear. The rock proved to be the best quality Southeast Asian karst and we committed to a full trad-style route straight out of the cave and up onto the headwall. On the first pitch we found perfect threads through pockets all the way and finally belayed at the top of a large stalactite below the lip of the cave, already 10 meters out from the base of the wall. The following day we began the second pitch, which climbed over the lip of the cave right of the stalactite and onto a slightly overhanging wall of crisp pockets. This pitch was well protected by Tricams, nuts, Camalots, and threads, and ended another eight meters out from the belay, where we placed two bolts. We fixed a rope down to the first belay and descended to town. Judging by the number of cobra skins we saw, bivouacs are not to be recommended.

The third pitch involved vertical razor edges with occasional cracks, fire ants, and some scary snake grass patches. Protection was spaced but adequate. The pitch ended on a fine wind-polished ledge with a large thread. One more pitch led up an amazing overhanging wall of unbelievable-quality red karst with threads readily available. Unfortunately it ended, left of the pointed top of the face, in the most heinous razor-rock vertical jungle imaginable. We descended to clean rock and rappelled the route. Two O'clock Wall is IV+ F6c.

Throughout the last day I had noticed a saffron dot in the sea of green rice below: a monk. The previous climbing party to visit Laos comprised Americans and Japanese, who established a number of sport routes close to the Mekong. The local headman in that area appears to be unhappy about their behavior. Local people have strong beliefs in mountain, cliff, and especially cave spirits, and do not take kindly to people hammering the rock or damaging it by placing bolts. We were careful to pick a venue that avoided offending cave spirits and when we came down that night, the villagers were friendly. We had obviously passed the scrutiny of the monk and had been accepted. The rice harvest was coming and the villagers thought we'd cause bad weather for their harvest by being above the fields and angering the mountain spirits. Moral: always check with your local monk. After that we never had a problem and completed 12 other routes, which were shorter but harder. On our return the following year we were treated like gold. Laos is a place to tread lightly, not only because of the millions of land mines and unexploded bombs. Respect will get you everything. This is a Buddhist/communist country and the people are proud to have survived all their troubles, while trying to find their way in the modern world.

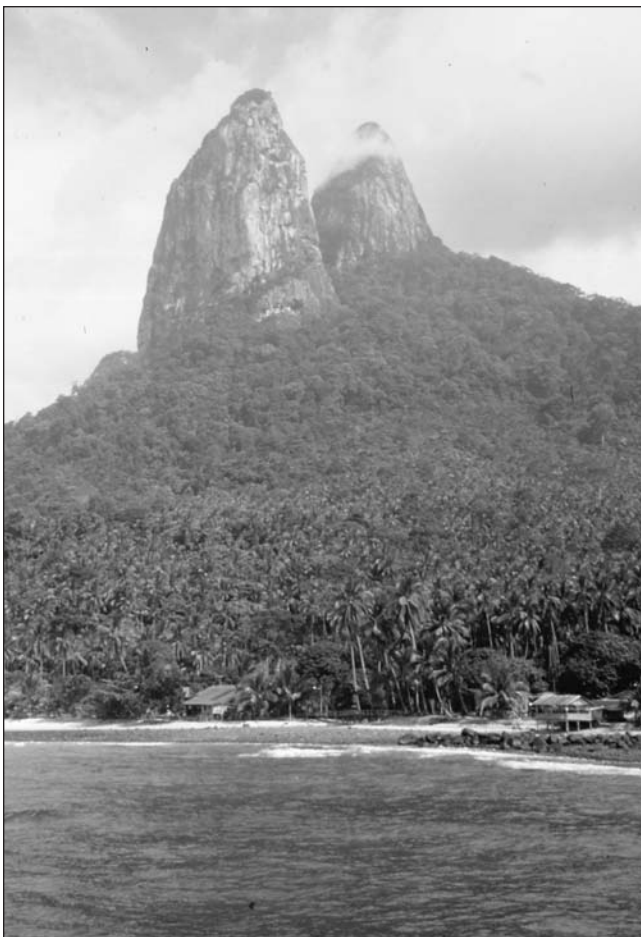
MALAYSIA

Tioman Island, Dragon's Horns, first ascent. In late August 2000 Nick Tomlin and I spent eight days on Pulau Tioman, an island off the eastern coast of Malaysia, making the first ascent of the impressive Bukit Nekek Semekut, one of two peaks on the island's southern tip known collectively as the Dragon's Horns. Our route, Waking Dream (V 5.9 A2) climbs the prominent 1200-foot south face of the jungle spire, and required four nights on the wall in portaledge. To the best of our knowledge this was the first ascent of the mountain.

The 10-pitch line required the drilling of eight bolts (for belays) and 10 rivets, in addition to the bolts already in place on pitches 1-4 from our previous attempts (1996 and 1998). The rock is relatively

good quality granite and our line follows the most obvious weakness on the face. We placed a handful of pins but the route will go clean very easily.

We endured one particularly terrifying lightning storm on the third night but other than that we had excellent weather. Pitch 5 was the crux, where Nick drilled five rivets to reach a thin crack, then used Aliens, hooks, micro nuts, and a very sketchy Tricam placement to lead us onto the lower-angled upper portion of the wall (pitches 3-5 are vertical to slightly overhanging). Pitches 7-10 were climbed in a summit push on the last day and involved mostly free climbing interspersed with some aid. Pitch 9 involved spectacular runout 5.9 face climbing on funky dimples and scoops in a water groove. Pitch 10 involved scampering up 5.5 friction and a bit of "jungle-neering." The top was spectacular, a perfectly flat Bonzai garden with stupendous views of the ocean, the island's interior, and surrounding peaks. We stacked a cairn on the summit boulder and snapped some photos before rappelling to our portaledge at the top of pitch 7 for the night. The following day we continued to the ground.



The Dragon's Horns of Tioman Island, Malaysia, formerly virgin. *Scotty Nelson*