

only bruises. Korsun suffered a fracture at the base of his skull. He did not regain consciousness and died two hours later. We lowered his body over two days to Base Camp. After this, the expedition was called off.

VIKTOR EFIMOV, *Russia*

*Chonturasu Glacier Area, Various Ascents.* In September, Pat Littlejohn followed up his 1997 guided expedition to the Chonturasu Glacier at the eastern end of the West Kokshaal-Tau with a second International School of Mountaineering trip, this time to the valley immediately east of the Komarova and visited briefly by his 1997 expedition. In contrast to the previous year, the weather was quite poor, with much heavy snowfall. The party climbed four easy snow peaks within striking distance of Base Camp before deciding to cut short their activities in the region.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Alpine Climbing Group*

## TIBET

*Yebokangal Ri and Porong Ri, Ascents.* We were Reinier Zuidhoff, leader; Hans Van Der Meulen, Wilco Van Rooijen, Cas Van De Gevel (all Dutch), Thierry Schmitter (F) and Marko Prezelj (SLO). Schmitter and I planned to climb a new route on the south face of Shishapangma; the two rope teams of Zuidhoff and Van Der Meulen, and Van Rooijen and Van De Gevel wanted to repeat one of the established routes on the south face. We planned to act independently once we left Base Camp.

On April 8, we reached Nyalam, starting point for the three- to four-day trek to Shishapangma's south face BC. On April 9, we went with the local yak men to check the conditions in the approach valley. Deep snow made it impossible for the yaks to leave Nyalam. After asking for porters, the Chinese LO told us that we would need to pay 1000 yuan for insurance for each porter. That was not acceptable to us, so they offered us transportation to the north side of the mountain, site of BC for the normal route on Shishapangma. It was not a good substitute for the south face, as we had no information about the north side. Regardless, we accepted, and were first at BC on April 16.

Thierry and I decided to act as "alpine" as possible—that is, no troubling over mountain names and altitudes, just "see, go and climb." After a fast acclimatization on the north ridge from the glacier up to 6500 meters, we decided to climb the first mountain on the west side of Shishapangma. On April 20, we crossed the glacier below the east face of Porong Ri. The next morning, we left our tent and began our climb of the face. In six hours we climbed a new route on the east face to the northeast ridge, which we followed for the last 150 meters to the east summit of Porong Ri. I reached the east summit (7284m) in very strong wind; Thierry turned back 50 meters from the summit. We descended via the northeast ridge, where we found some fixed ropes (the ridge had been climbed in May, 1982, by a 14-member Japanese expedition that used three camps), then continued to our tent and on to BC the same day. The 1000-meter route has ice and snow with one short rock section. On the upper section, we found hard ice up to 60° covered with dry snow. The difficulty of the route is akin to the Austrian route on Les Courtes in the French Alps.

After six days of rest in unstable weather with strong winds, we left BC on April 28 for the next climb. This time we wanted to climb to the west summit (7332m) of Yebokangal Ri



*The east face of Porong Ri. The line of ascent is solid; the dotted line marks the descent.*

MARKO PREZELJ

(a.k.a. Jebo Kangri; the peak has two summits: the east summit is 7365m). Yebokangal Ri sits in front (north) of Shishapangma. If conditions were good, we wanted to continue up to the summit of Shishapangma.

We started at 6 a.m. from BC and after 13 hours we put up a tent at around 7000 meters below the ridge. The whole day was characterized by strong winds and drifting snow. We encountered one difficult section of powder snow over steep rock, but the rest was mostly snow and ice with short mixed sections, made more difficult by the powder snow over ice and rock and the constant wind.

On April 29, we climbed over the north ridge to the west summit (7332m), which we reached in strong winds at 2 p.m. We descended to the other side on the big plateau (7100m) where the normal route on Shishapangma goes. We put up the tent and decided to take one day's rest to dry our clothes and fuel our bodies with liquid and food for a fast ascent via the normal route the day after (the north face looked too icy with dry snow over it).

The rest day had almost no wind or clouds, so we expected similar weather the next day. But the next night was very windy and at 6 a.m. it began to snow a heavy, wet snow at 7100 meters. That forced us down the normal route, since we were afraid of deep snow on the normal route, which we knew nothing about. After two hours it stopped snowing and by 11 a.m. the sky was quite clear. By then we were already at CI, so we continued to BC.

After reaching BC, I caught a bad cold and was so weak I had no energy or motivation to attempt the normal (ski) route. On May 6, Zuidhoff and Van Der Meulen reached the central summit with one Spaniard and two South Tyroleans in one day of perfect weather from CIII via the normal route.

The weather was quite bad most of the time of my stay in BC. Hans, Reinier and I left BC on May 13. Wilco, Cas and Thierry stayed on for one more attempt on the normal route. The



*Yebokangal Ri (a.k.a. Jebo Kangri) showing the line of ascent and descent (ending in tracks in foreground). The northwest face of Shishapangma is in the background. MARKO PREZELJ*

weather become much better in the second part of May, and they, along with most of the members from many expeditions this season in BC, reached the summit.

Ours was the second ascent, via a new route, of Yebokangal Ri, and possibly the first ascent of the west summit and first traverse of the mountain. Our new route on Porong Ri was the third ascent of the mountain. Of the crowd of more than 100 “climbers” in Shishapangma BC this season, we were the only ones to do something other than the normal route. Some of the “conquerors” expressed surprise that we did not have a strong desire for the summit itself. Some of them didn’t even know that there were mountains other than Shishapangma. That was a completely new experience for me. I think that the normal route on Shishapangma is totally commercialized; you can buy entire altitude camps from the expeditions that are leaving BC.

MARKO PREZELJ, *Planinska zveza Slovenije*

#### NYANGLA QEN TANGLA SHAN RANGE

*Sepu Kunglha Karpo Massif, Various Activity.* The Nyangla Qen Tangla Shan in Eastern Tibet is topped by Sepu Kangri (6950m). After first seeing Sepu Kangri in 1982 from a plane while flying from Chengdu to Lhasa, I finally reached the area in 1996 and led another expedition to attempt the peak in 1997 (see 1998 AAJ, pp. 348-351). We returned in the autumn of 1998. Charles Clarke and Elliot Robertson set out three weeks before the rest of the team to find a route into the Sepu Kangri massif from the east. It was a particularly heavy monsoon and as a result they were unable to make their approach around the southern aspect of the Nyangla Qen Tangla Shan, but were forced to take the northern route through Nakchu and Chamdo. They reached Base Camp on August 30, two days after the main climbing party left the U.K. They