



*Nilkanth, showing the West Ridge route (Leedale-Moran-Nisbet-Preston-Venter, 2000).*

MARTIN MORAN

led by Martin Moran made the first ascent of the west ridge of Nilkanth. This ice spire rising directly above Badrinath Temple is one of the most beautiful summits of the Indian Himalaya and has an enigmatic reputation, with only two known ascents in 50 years of attempts on all sides. The summit was gained on June 1 by Moran, John Leedale (U.K.), Andy Nisbet (U.K.), Jonathan Preston (U.K.), and Casper Venter (S.A.). The route involved initial danger of serac fall on the climb from base camp, but thereafter was relatively safe with rock pitches up to IV+, some sustained Scottish grade II and III mixed climbing, and a fine corniced summit ridge at an overall grade of D+/TD-. The team fixed 200 meters of rope around pinnacles at the foot of the ridge but thereafter climbed in alpine style.

First inspected by Edmund Hillary during his first visit to the Himalaya in 1951, the west ridge was most recently attempted in 1993 by British climbers Chris Pasteur and Duncan Tunstall, who had to retreat from 5850 meters due to altitude sickness.

Having broken the run of bad luck that has dogged so many parties on Nilkanth, our ascent might help popularize the mountain as a feasible objective for short trips. The south and southwest faces offer technical superalpine challenges, and the fiercely pinnacled south-east ridge remains unclimbed, having repulsed both British and American parties.

MARTIN MORAN, *United Kingdom*

*Pt. 5919m and Pt. 5447m, First Ascents.* Between May 18 and June 1, a British party explored the unclimbed Panpatia range of peaks to the south of Nilkanth. The range, known as the Vishnu Ghar (Vishnu's Fortress), is approached by a two-day trek from the Badrinath road and is not subject to any access restrictions. Approaches to many attractive 19,000-foot summits were difficult due to receding glaciers with steep icefalls, but, on May 24 and 25, Robin

Bennie, Steve Brown, Harold Edwards, Denise Forster, Paul Josse, James MacKenzie, Simon Needham, and Jonathan Preston (all U.K.) made the first ascent of Pt. 5919m, for which they propose the name "Lakshmi's Peak," at PD+/AD- standard. On May 21, Eddie Gillespie, John Leedale, Martin Moran, and John Venier reached the South Summit of Pt. 5447m after a 300-meter climb of AD- standard, only to find that the North Summit is ten meters higher. The name "Ravindra's Peak" is proposed for the peak, which offers good training climbs for parties based in the Panpatia Valley.

Between May 27 and 31, a party of 12 made the first recorded crossing of the 5200-meter Panpatia Col to Madhyamaneshwar Temple and Kalimath. This col lies three kilometers south of the Satopanth Col, which was used by Shipton and Tilman on their epic crossing of the Badrinath-Kedarnath Watershed in 1934. The Panpatia Col was gained by a direct route through the Panpatia Glacier icefall (PD+), which was practical in the pre-monsoon season. Steep snowslopes offered a straightforward descent of the western side of the col to Maindagalla Lake and Madhyamaneshwar. This is a relatively safe and highly recommended crossing. A clutch of summits between 5400 and 5850 meters in this area, together with 6257-meter Parvati Parbat on the north side of the Panpatia Glacier, all remain unclimbed.

MARTIN MORAN, *United Kingdom*

*Abi Gamin and Mukut Parvat East, Ascents.* A 15-member Korean expedition led by Nam-il Kim made ascents of Abi Gamin (7355m) and Mukut Parvat East (7130m) in August. (This same team had climbed Mukut Parvat East II two years before.) They established their base camp on August 3 with the help of 150 porters. They approached the mountain from Badrinath and followed the route to the center of both the peaks. Common camps were set up for both peaks. On August 11, they established Camp III at ca. 6600 meters. Mukut Parvat East was climbed by three members on August 22, and four members reached the summit on August 26. Abi Gamin was climbed by three members on August 27.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

*Arwa Spire, East Summit, First Ascent.* In October, a British expedition led by Kenton Cool made the first ascent of the Arwa Spire's East Summit (6193m) via the Northeast Ridge (TD+ WI4 5.9, 2000m). Andy Benson and Pete Benson climbed the route on October 11, followed, on October 16, by Kenton Cool, Ian Parnell, and Al Powell. A full account of the climbs appears earlier in this journal.

*Shivling, Direct North Ridge.* A two-member team comprising Thomas and Alexander Huber were in the Garhwal to climb a direct finish to the north ridge of Shivling (6543m). When Alexander fell ill early in the expedition, Thomas teamed up with Iwan Wolf, a member of a Swiss expedition to the mountain. On May 31, the two completed *Shiva's Line* (7 A4 70°, 400 meters), a direct finish via the headwall of a line climbed in part by the Japanese (1980) and Hans Kammerlander and Christophe Hainz (1993). The entire route is graded 7 A4 M6, 1443 meters. The climb received the 2001 Piolet d'Or award. A full account of the expedition appears earlier in this journal.

*Peak 5242m, First Ascent.* A 16-member Indian expedition led by Pradeep Kr. Kar intended