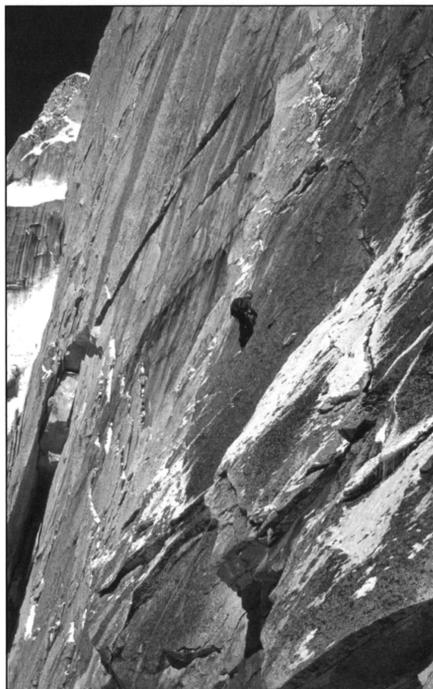


*Changabang, west face; Purbi Dunagiri, south pillar and east ridge; three attempts.* After three years of training and organization, the DAV-Expeditionskader '02 left Germany for India in mid September. Our goals were the first repetition of Changabang (6,866m) west face (Boardman-Tasker, 1975) and the first ascent of Purbi Dunagiri (6,523m) east ridge. We had no information on the latter other than indistinct photographs. Both mountains are located in the quite famous Nanda Devi Sanctuary. Purbi Dunagiri was our alternative for Dunagiri, since Indian authorities wouldn't give permission for the Rishi Gorge, the normal access to Dunagiri. In any case to get to Changabang's west face we had decided to approach via the Bagini Glacier.

From the village of Juma on the Dhauliganga river, we trekked for two days via Dunagiri village (3,600m) to our base camp, a dreamlike meadow surrounded by impressive mountain scenery. The following days were considerably less romantic. Piles of equipment had to be transported to advanced base by all 11 members of our team along a chaotic sea of loose rock. The "path" led to our proposed camp site at the end of Bagini Glacier, right between Changabang and Purbi Dunagiri.

Four members tried to climb the steep ice slope to Bagini Col, the starting point of the west face, but on this north facing slope there was nothing but meters of deep powder. The climbers were forced to retreat in spite of some stubborn attempts to reach the face.

After this defeat three of them decided to try an alternative line on Purbi Dunagiri, the marvelous south pillar. In super-light alpine style they solo-climbed 60°–80° ice slopes to the beginning of the difficulties. Ten pitches of excellent and severe mixed ground led to a rock barrier, where overhanging loose terrain at ca 6,300m stopped their big effort and forced a retreat.



David Goettler on the south pillar of Purbi. Hans Mitterer

In the meantime the rest of our group fought up Purbi Dunagiri's east ridge meter by meter. The extremely high rock difficulties and problems with the altitude by most of the members forced us to operate with fixed ropes. The ridge turned out to be much more difficult and severe than we expected. After 100m of hard rock climbing, fixing, hauling, and jumaring, we stood in front of the "chandelle," as we called the key passage of the ridge at 6,200m. We couldn't find a way over this compact, overhanging, and fragile rock pillar, so once again had to retreat with the summit in sight. In addition, increased snowfall and icy storms heralded the beginning of winter (it was mid October).

So, after four weeks, we turned our backs on base camp and the huge mountains. We reached no summit but returned to civilization healthy, full of new experiences, and as friends.

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