Nyanchen Thanglha, Golden Dragon, White Pagoda, Yarlung Ri, previously unreported first ascents. In September 2000 Erich Gatt, Hansjoerg Pfaundler, and myself, Christian Haas, visited the Nyanchen Thanglha ca 80km north of Lhasa. Here, in an area which is still largely unexplored, we made several first ascents in alpine style. Base camp was established on September 15 in the Lan Puk Valley at 5,080m. On September 18 we slept for the first time at our 5,800m high camp. As we were using skis, the descent toward base camp next day proved quite fun, apart from minor tumbles due to wearing mountain boots on telemark skis.

During the descent Hansjoerg and I decided to try an easy-looking peak. After reaching a windy col via a steep rocky slope, we climbed the broad snowy southeast ridge. The last 100m was an extremely narrow snow arête, and at 2:30 p.m. we reached the summit of Everest, summer attempt to ski and snowboard the mountain. There was only one expedition to the mountain during the summer and they planned a ski/snowboard descent. The two climbing members were Jimmy Chin, the skier, and Stephen Koch, the snowboarder; they had with them two climbing Sherpas. They were on the north face with the intention of climbing to the summit via a direct line up the Japanese and Hornbein Couloirs, then descending the same route. But they went no higher than 7,000m, to a point near the top of the Japanese Couloir, in increasingly deep snow, which they report as not less than knee-high. On their first attempt in August the weather was warm, and wet snow stopped them at the start of the face. On the second attempt and having climbed through the night, they turned around at 8:30 a.m. on September 10. Their progress had become much too slow and the four climbers decided that under the prevailing conditions they would be very extended reaching their planned camp site at 7,800m. Unfortunately, conditions did not improve before their permit expired.
Three days later Erich woke us up at the high camp with his mouth-organ and then with Hansjoerg started out for the White Pagoda (Chorten Garpo in Tibetan; Ba ta Shan in Chinese). I remained behind with a headache. After climbing the steep and snowy south-southeast flank of the mountain they reached the northwest ridge and followed this, via some mixed terrain, to the 6,415m summit (N30°17,817; E090°29,738). In the meantime my headache had worsened, so I decided to go straight down to base camp.

Next day, September 23, I went back up to high camp to find that Erich and Hansjoerg had already left for Golden Dragon (Sir Duk in Tibetan; Jin Long in Chinese). It was already midday but I decided to start out for White Pagoda via the south ridge. Two steep, snow-covered ramps led up the south face to a small col on the south ridge. From here I followed the ridge—a sharp snow arête—to the summit, which I reached at around 4 p.m.

In the meantime Erich and Hansjoerg had succeeded in reaching the summit of the 6,653m Golden Dragon (N30°18,219; E090°28,826) via a route up the south face.

Next day it was my turn to climb Golden Dragon, repeating the same route followed by Erich and Hansjoerg. From the foot of the south face at 6,140m I climbed up snowy gullies and along ridges with short passages of crumbling rock. In the upper section the route followed a long steep snow slope we christened the White Sickle due to its shape. This never-ending slope continued right up to the crest of the summit ridge, west of the highest point. The angle was generally ca 50° with short passages of 60°. Several hundred meters along the highly corniced crest but moderately angled ridge led to the highest point, which I reached at around 1 p.m. I descended and that same day we walked back down to base camp with huge sacs to meet the shepherds who had come up to carry out our equipment next day. As far as we know there are no detailed maps for this area and we used only our eyes and a hand held GPS-device for documenting our travels.

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