

Seon-tae from the Bong-ahm Alpine Club, and Park Young-sik from the Gyeong-hee University Alpine Club. The team arrived at Tapovan base camp on August 8 to open a new route on the east face of Meru Central (6,320m), commonly referred to as the Shark's Fin. On August 11 they established advanced base at 4,300m and then took roughly five days to fix 500m of rope to Camp 1 at 5,400m. They continued fixing rope and after 15-days reached a high point of 5,800m, at the base of the rock wall forming the Fin. Rockfall during the day forced them to climb and ferry gear at night, until the small hours of the morning. Just preparing to start climbing on the Fin took 30 days.

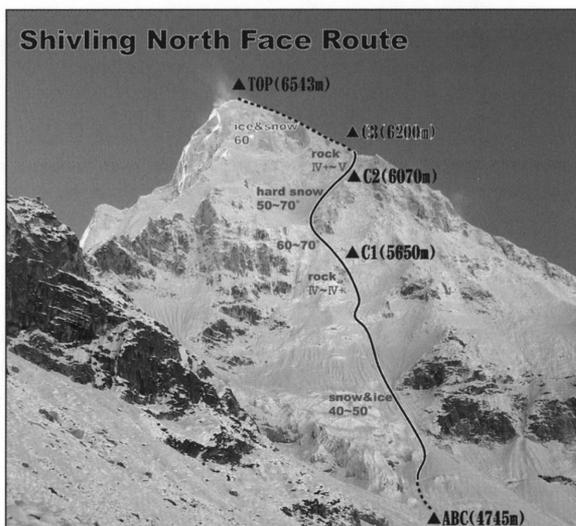
On September 9 they began climbing the main rock wall, but the weather deteriorated. Over the next three days, despite consistently poor weather and high difficulties, they reached 6,000m but shortly after decided to abandon the route. They began a perilous descent in atrocious conditions. As their sole concern was self-preservation, they abandoned the majority of the gear and fixed line. Their equipment remains fixed on Meru Peak, as trials of the Shark's Fin does on their minds.

LEE YOUNG-JUN, Korea (translated by Peter Jensen-Choi)

Shivling (6,543m), north face and northwest ridge. Well-acclimatized after their second ascent of Muztagh Ata's southeast ridge, reported elsewhere in this *Journal*, Kazuya Hiraide (26) and Kei Taniguchi (33) arrived in Delhi on September 19 and by the 28th had established base camp at Tapovan. By then Polish and Czech parties attempting Shivling and a Korean team on Meru had given up, because of bad weather, and headed home.

The weather started to improve, and the Japanese pair spent from September 29 to October 7 reconnoitring their descent on the west ridge, looking at both the north and south sides of Shivling, and climbing the north side of Baby Shivling (5,500m) to complete their acclimatization. Their main objective was the unclimbed northwest ridge, which they planned to reach via the lower section of the north face.

On October 8 they left base camp with climbing gear, a tent, light bivouac bags, and food for five days. On a flat rock at the foot of the north face they made their first camp, at 4,750m. The following day they crossed a crevassed zone and front-pointed the initial snow and ice



A foreshortened view of the north face of Shivling (6,543m) showing the new Japanese line on the north face to northwest ridge (Hiraide-Taniguchi). The ridge bounding the left side of this face is the north ridge, first climbed by Japanese in 1980 but more directly in 1993 by Italians and with an impressive direct finish in 2000 by Huber and Wolf. The lower section of the Japanese route corresponds to the 1987 Czechoslovak Route, which continues more directly to the top section of the northwest ridge. The latter is still unclimbed in its entirety. *Kazuya Hiraide*

slope. They quickly reached the first rock barrier, which was to prove one of the key parts of the route. They were unable to dry-tool and had to resort to conventional rock climbing, cleaning snow from the rock as they went. They camped at 5,650m, in the lower section of the large funnel-shaped snowfield.

On the 10th the angle of the snow slope became steeper than anticipated, generally 50–70° but in some parts even steeper. The snow was hard and compact, and though they had feared this section might be avalanche-prone, there was actually very little danger. Small powder-snow avalanches sometimes occurred, but were harmless. Toward the top of the funnel-shaped snowfield the climbers stopped for the night, at 6,070m, and made a hanging bivouac.

On the 11th they tackled the second rock wall, which was another crux and led to the junction with the northwest ridge. Though the last part was difficult, they were able to exit above the big serac barrier. The ridge ahead was not so easy, and they had to remain roped. They set up their third camp at 6,200m.

On the 12th they ascended the upper part of the northwest ridge and, after surmounting a section of 60° snow/ice, reached the summit of Shivling at midday. Half an hour later they began the descent, stopping again at their top camp, so they could descend through the serac barrier in well-frozen conditions the following morning. From there they reached the Normal Route (west ridge), arriving at base camp the same day.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA FROM INFORMATION PROVIDED BY KAZUYA HIRAIDE, *Japanese Alpine Club*

Editor's note: The northwest ridge integral is unclimbed, and the Japanese reached the crest via the lower section of the 1987 Czechoslovakian Route on the north face.

CENTRAL GARHWAL

Kamet, Normal Route, ascent. In the autumn Sue Nott and I spent seven weeks on an expedition to Kamet. We were plagued by horrible weather. On the approach from base camp to advanced base we got trapped between camps for five days while more than 3½m of snow fell. We had been in India for 25 days and only seen our objective, the unclimbed east face, for 10 minutes. And we still hadn't made it to advanced base, which is only a three-day hike from base camp in normal conditions.

Kamet (7,756m) is situated close to the Indo-Tibet border, and a peak permit for foreigners requires permission from both India and China. Receiving this permit would have likely been impossible without the help of Ibex Expeditions, our great outfitter. One condition of the permit was a strict six-week time limit. Our original plan was to acclimatize on the Normal Route (the northeast face, first climbed by Lewa, Holdsworth, Smythe, and Shipton way back in 1931), and, after resting, go for it on the east face. When nearly out of time, we had to compromise and go for the summit by the Normal Route. Two of the three teams with plans for this route had already pulled the plug. These large teams had many high-altitude porters and twelve climbing Sherpas. The mountain was covered with deep snow, and the avalanche hazard was high. On September 30 we left our one-tent advanced base at 5,500m and started up with light packs, five days food, and fuel. We found spectacular yet technically easy terrain on this historic route, but the upper snow slopes scared the crap out of us. Here, we broke trail