

with precipitous drops on both sides, before he reached the summit. Fujikawa appears to have made the climb in one push on the 23rd, leaving base camp at 3 a.m. and returning at 9:30 p.m.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*, [www.climbmagazine.com](http://www.climbmagazine.com)

## UPPER DOLPO

### PANZANG REGION

*Chamar Kang, probable first ascent.* After a long trek around northern Dolpo following in the footsteps of the great Japanese explorer Ekai Kawaguchi, a seven-member Osaka Yamanokai (Osaka Alpine Club) party, led by Tamotsu Ohnishi, arrived at Tinkyu in the Panzang Khola and on September 19 set up base camp at Kangtega Sumna (4,550m), between the 5,564m border pass of Chukang La and, to the south, the 5,466m Kella La.

The next day they traveled west into the valley known as Tinje, from where they planned to attempt Chamar Kang (a.k.a. Changmar Kang or Kang Tega, 6,060m, N 29°14'10", E 83°21'48"). From here they climbed to the crest of the north ridge at 5,886m but then descended to a col at 5,720m to set up a high camp for the night.

On the 21st Toshitsugi Irisawa, Koichi Kato, Ohnishi, and Chhepa Sherpa left the camp at 6:15 a.m. and set off up the northeast face. They climbed this snow-and-ice slope of 45-55° in nine pitches by front-pointing, using double ice tools and 60m ropes. A further four pitches led to the summit, which they gained at 2 p.m. By 3:30 p.m. all four had regained the high camp, and they returned to base camp just after 7 p.m. Worsening weather accompanied them as they climbed down the route of ascent [Ohnishi originally believed that this peak had been climbed previously, but there are no reports of this, nor did he find any evidence—Ed]. The next day Kaori Inaba and Koji Mizutani repeated the ascent.

TAMOTSU OHNISHI, *Japanese Alpine Club*

### ANNAPURNA HIMAL

*Varaha Shikhar (The Fang), second ascent, east face to south ridge.* [Photo on page 4.] Gangwon University Korean Expedition made a new route up the Fang (7,647m), via the 1,400m east face to the south ridge. The only previous ascent of this difficult mountain on the rim of the Annapurna Sanctuary southwest of Annapurna I was made in 1980 from the west, outside the Sanctuary, by an Austrian expedition. Connecting the east face to the south ridge from inside the Sanctuary had captured the attention of Korean teams since 1986. Gangwon University expeditions attempted this route unsuccessfully in 1991 and 1997.

The expedition left Korea on September 1 and spent seven days beginning September 4 acclimatizing in the Langtang, where they climbed Naya Kanga (a.k.a. Kangja Chuli, 5,844m). After this the team of Choi Chan-gyu, Hong Seong-wook, Kim Yong-gil, Lee Jong-heon, Lee Hak-young, Park Bong-ha, Park Hong-gi, Park Su-seok, Song Il-ho, Yu Hyun-jong, Yu Jae-hyeong, and Sherpas Dapjen, Geljen, Swana, Tshering, and Wangdi was helicoptered to a 4,600m base camp below the Fang, arriving on the 17th. Due to over a meter of fresh snow and a large crevasse, it was necessary to establish a temporary camp before eventually siting Camp 1

at 5,400m on the 30th, after 12 days hard work. Camp 2 (5,900m), about half way up the east face, and Camp 3 (6,400m), on the crest of the south ridge, were established in the next week and Camp 4 at 6,900m on October 11. On the 16th a final camp was placed on the ridge at 7,200m.

Yu Hyun-jong and three Sherpas stayed at this Camp 5, while Kim Yong-gil and Park Hong-gi stayed at Camp 4 to support Yu and Park Su-seok in a summit attempt on the 17th. However, the final 200m to the top turned out to be far more difficult than expected, with sections of 80°. The lead climbers retreated so as to retrieve more rope to fix on this final section, to ensure a safe ascent and safe return [reportedly 6,600m of rope were fixed intermittently from base camp to summit, with the whole section from Camp 1 to 4 fixed—Ed.]. Everyone descended to base camp, a particularly trying event for Yu and Park, the former having been badly frostbitten (some Sherpas high on the mountain also contracted frostbite). On October 22 the team began to move up the mountain for their final attempt, but on the 24th Park Bong-ha fell from the fixed ropes below Camp 3. He was injured, and two members descended to him with food and a sleeping bag, then dug a small snow cave for shelter. He was nursed there for some time until able to move, when a group helped him back to the ridge and then down to Camp 1.

On the 27th Choi Chan-gyu was also injured in a fall, though not so badly. Finally, on the 29th, Park Su-seok and Sherpas Wangdi and Tshering stood on the summit. All members were back at base camp on the 31st. The route has been named Dalgwa Yeohoon (which translates to “Yeo-hoon with the Moon”) after Korean Kim Yeo-hoon who lost his life in a fall during the 1997 attempt.

LEE YOUNG-JUN, *Corean Alpine Club* (translated by Peter Jensen-Choi)

*Editor's note: The Fang had been attempted eight times before the Korean ascent. In 1979 it was being billed as the highest unclimbed mountain in Nepal, and during the spring of that year Sepp Mayerl's Austrian team tried the very steep west ridge, approaching from the north flank and fixing 3,000m of rope before establishing Camp 5 at 6,600m. But after a member lower on the mountain slipped and fell 2,000m to his death, the expedition was abandoned. In the autumn of the same year Arturo Bergamaschi's Italian expedition tried the mountain from the Annapurna Sanctuary, on the opposite side. They attempted the southeast ridge, which they abandoned at 6,350m because it was far too difficult and dangerous. Mayerl returned the following spring, this time focusing on the south flank of the west ridge. The Austrians reached the crest at ca 5,700m, after climbing a wall similar to the Matterhorn north face. They then fixed the ridge to 6,450m. Leaving a camp there, Mayerl, Hermann Neumair, and Ang Chhopal Sherpa, reached the summit after a night at 7,040m. In 1982 French attempted the east ridge to the south ridge, climbing a couloir on the east flank to reach the east ridge at 6,800m. The way above looked similar to the south face of Annapurna, but bad weather prevented them from attempting it. In autumn 1984 Scott Fischer and two companions followed the line attempted by Mayerl's 1979 expedition; the west ridge from the north. Fischer and Wesley Krause reached a high point of ca 7,300m before bad weather forced retreat. Autumn 1986 saw the first of four Korean expeditions. Kim Jong-Duk and five others attempted the east face, but after fixing 2,600m of rope over difficult terrain had still only reached 5,450m. When avalanches wiped out 1,000m of their rope, the team gave up their attempt. The next Korean attempt took place during the first weeks in December 1991, when Yu Jae-Hyung's 11-member team tried the Italian line on the southeast ridge. They found the route technically very difficult, and at 6,350m*

*retreated due to high winds. Yu returned in the autumn of 1997 and tried the east face direct to the south ridge. The team reached 7,300m on the ridge before Kim Yeo-Hoon fell to his death.*

*Annapurna I, south face, new route attempt.* Ueli Steck of Switzerland wanted to complete a route on Annapurna I's vast south face that had been started in the autumn of 1992 by French climbers Pierre Beghin and Jean-Christophe Lafaille. These two Frenchmen had been attempting an alpine-style ascent of the great face by a new line in the couloir slightly to the right (east) of the 1970 British route and had reached 7,400 meters, when they were forced to retreat in the face of snow and wind. During the descent a rappel anchor failed and Beghin fell to his death.

In May, Steck went to complete this line alone, but he was defeated at only 5,850m on the 21st when he was hit by a falling stone that smashed his helmet—though not his head. He fell to ca 5,500m on the glacier, was knocked out, and has no memory of what happened. He staggered away with bad bruising on the back of his head and his spinal area, but no blood flowed. As he wandered around not knowing where he was, Robbi Bösch, a member of his support team, found him. With a badly bruised body and his only helmet shattered, Steck abandoned the idea of climbing the south face of Annapurna for the moment. “This route is climbable,” he said, but didn't know whether he still wanted to be the one to climb it.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, AAC Honorary Member, Nepal

*Annapurna East, first solo ascent.* One of the main events of autumn was the solo ascent, by Slovenian mountaineer Tomaz Humar, of Annapurna East via the south face to the east ridge. Humar selected the far eastern end of the face because there are not as many falling stones as elsewhere. After arriving in the Annapurna Sanctuary, Humar first acclimatized by climbing the popular trekking peak Tharpa Chuli (a.k.a. Tent Peak, 5,663m) via the northwest face. After this his first major problem was to find a feasible way to get to Annapurna's south face among confusing rock towers and wide crevasses. It took him five days to find the key, a small hidden plateau near the foot of the face. He then rested at base camp and waited for a snowstorm to end before going for his climb.

On October 24, with a Sherpa companion, Jagat Limbu, he crossed the South Annapurna Glacier and climbed up to a glacial terrace below the east rib of Annapurna, where the pair camped for the night at 5,800m. To this point the route followed the line taken by previous attempts and ascents of Annapurna's long east ridge and features a section of complex ground, including a tricky rock buttress through the icefall. Prior to this, Humar had not slept above 5,300m and decided to spend the next day furthering his acclimatization by staying put in camp. He spent three hours looking for a way to cross the plateau to access the face and during that day a fierce wind moved his tent 20m while he was inside, but no damage was done. On the 26th he set off at 6 a.m. Jagat Limbu would wait at this camp until Humar returned.

The Slovenian began climbing the south face of Kangsar Kang (a.k.a. Roc Noir, 7,485m) to the right of Annapurna's east rib. He took food for five days, a stove and two gas cylinders, a bivouac sac, a small sleeping bag, two ice screws, two Prussiks, and an ice axe, but no helmet nor oxygen. At first the face was bare rock, then covered with snow, then rock, again snow, and his second bivouac at 7,200m was in a snow hole he dug out of deep snow. He stayed there for two nights while rocks fell beside his snug hole; he was not hit.