

On March 14, after only one day's rest at base camp, Gukov, Koval, and Shamalo started back up the route but with a change of plan. The first foray had showed that the upper, partially overhanging pillar would need much aid, a portaledge, and capsule style. The team had not brought a ledge and wanted to climb in alpine style, so they followed a slanting line up left, bypassing the overhanging pillar to reach the upper section of the French Route. The initial pitches followed snow and ice runnels to a complex rock section, which the three crossed on aid. Above, the climbing was a mixture of free (with ice tools) and aid.

They made their first bivouac at the top of pitch 11, the second on pitch 14, third on pitch 18, fourth on pitch 20, fifth on pitch 23 (above which they joined the French Route), sixth on pitch 28, seventh on pitch 33, and on the eighth day, their 37th pitch took them to the summit. Most bivouacs were of the "sitting" variety, but the weather was generally stable throughout, with temperatures down to -20°C. On a couple of days it snowed in the afternoon, causing spindrift avalanches. On those occasions they stopped early for the night. The Russians found no trace of previous passage until they joined the French Route, where they discovered a piton. Difficulties were Russian 6B, VI+ A2 80°, and the height of the route just over 1,600m (2,030m of climbing). They reached the summit at 2 p.m. on March 20, just within the calendar winter season.

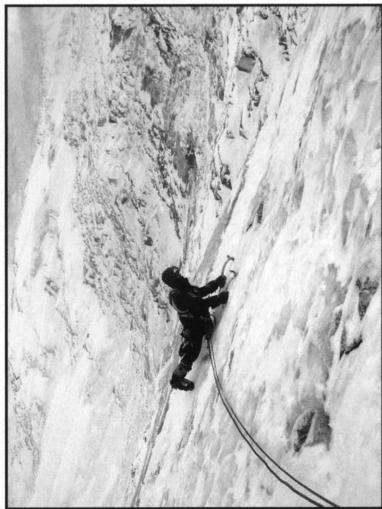
After spending the night on a snowfield, below and southwest of the summit, they descended the southwest ridge. This proved difficult, as they had only a vague idea of the line. They ended up on the southwest face and had to make a few rappels, another bivouac, and then a tricky descent of the lower icefall and glacier before they reached level ground and were able to take off their harnesses for the first time in 10 days. For the last two of these days they had nothing to eat, so the descent to Gokyo Valley proved harder than expected. They reached base camp on the 24th.

From material provided by ANNA PIUNOVA, mountain.ru

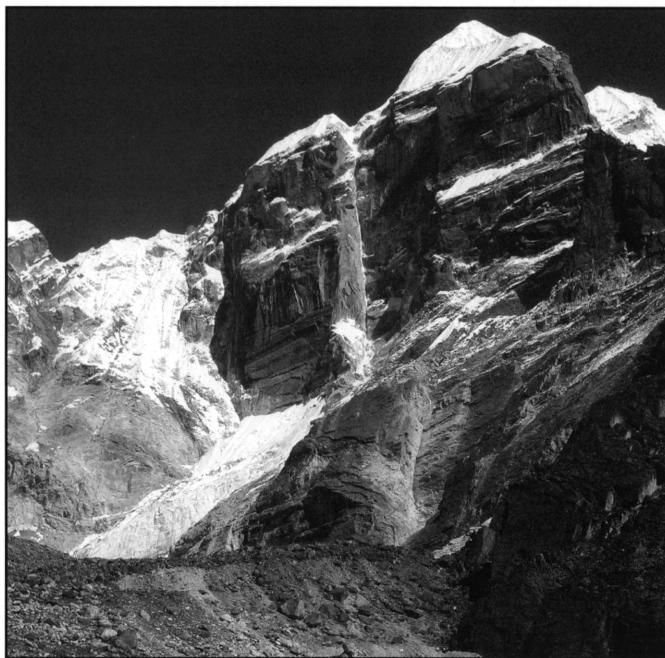
Lobuje East (6,119m), southwest face, Night Terror. On October 29, Jared Vilhauer and I started up what we believe to be a previously unclimbed ice line on the southwest face of Lobuje East. We'd spotted it while making day hikes toward the Cho La (pass). Ice in the back of a prominent weakness caught our attention.

We woke at midnight and were soon ascending a moraine that gave out onto scree-covered ice, which we climbed to gain recently revealed, glacier-polished bedrock. Jared drew the first pitch, which earned the nickname "sparky." After pounding in a Lost Arrow and a stopper, he locked off on a left tool torqued in a crack, and reached high with the right. The right tool raked and bounced off a ledge covered in a veneer of ice and loose rocks; at the same time his feet skated off the polish and showered me with sparks. This was the first M7 pitch and a great warm-up.

Above, glacial slopes rose at 50–60°. We climbed simultaneously up runnels, running out



Approximately 24 pitches up the Russian Route on Cholatse, before the junction with the French Route.
Supplied by Anna Piunova, mountain.ru



Southwest face of Lobuje East. Night Terror climbs the obvious rectilinear ice plastered into the back of the right-facing granite diebre. It then slants right to gain the crest of the northwest ridge. *Joel Kauffman*



Jared Vilhauer climbs a long, delicate pitch of WI5+ on Night Terror. *Joel Kauffman*

of ice screws on three occasions and having to set belays. Making a rightward rising traverse, we covered ca 300m before arriving at the base of the weakness. I took the mixed entry pitch, which was characterized by great stemming on relatively good granite with sufficient protection. The next pitch was steep WI5+ with a chandelier of stalactites. It was delicate; Jared avoided placing screws in the hollow curtain.

A few steps of moderate ice gave way to steep mixed climbing on marginal rock. In order to protect the M5 crux, I had to use tied-off stubby ice screws and a Camalot 4.

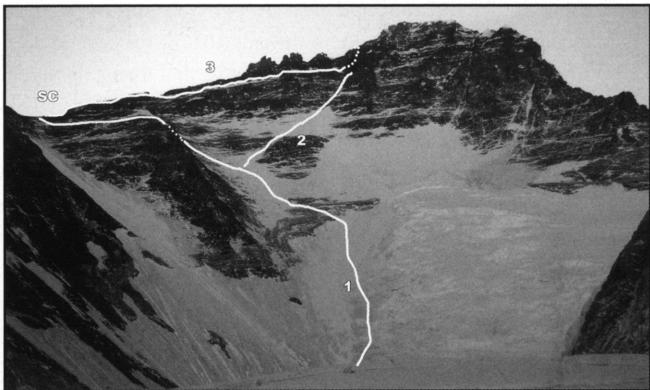
Above, a nine-meter-wide snow couloir gave a good opportunity to stop for a second brew. We made two liters of water and a liter of soup while watching the sun set. We were now about six hours behind schedule.

Jared continued on snow and AI3; I followed when the rope came tight. We dead-ended just below the ridge and traversed three short pitches to the right. It turned midnight while Jared was leading 65m of AI4 in runnels on the upper west face; we had already begun nodding off at belays. When Jared handed over the lead two hours later, we both thought it was no more than 40m to the ridge. I climbed 20m of AI4 before entering a 20m horizontal tunnel under a cornice. At the end I dug a snow bollard and draped the ropes over it before climbing onto the ridge. The crest rose as far as I could see; the snow was like sand inside an hourglass, only lighter.

After 2½ hours I reached a flat spot on the ridge and dug a hole. I sat on my pack and put Jared on a hip belay. This was the first flat spot since leaving our high camp 27 hours earlier. From here it was a short distance over similar snow to the true summit. It was 4:30 a.m. and pitch black as we snapped one photo before simul-climbing along the ridge and down the normal route. We named the line Night Terror (VI AI4 M7 WI5+ 85°).

JOEL KAUFFMAN, AAC

Lhotse (8,516m), west flank of north ridge. The idea of a route up Lhotse from the South Col had been floating in the air for a long time. The north ridge is a logical line, but what about the pinnacles on the crest? What about climbing lower, along the west flank, along the rocky ledges that run toward the couloir of the Normal Route? For many years I had looked at this variant as a possible means of completing an Everest-Lhotse traverse. I'd tried it with Simone Moro. In spring 2010 I was back again with Simone, and together we reached Camp 3 (7,300m) on the Lhotse Face. Then the situation became complicated and put me under great psychological pressure. A Russian on the expedition died; our client refused to continue with the ascent; Simone fell ill; the wind was strong, and



Lhotse west face from Western Cwm, (1) Standard Everest route to (SC) South Col. (2) Normal Route on Lhotse (west face couloir). (3) Urubko route on west flank of north ridge. Denis Urubko



Lhotse from the South Col, showing Urubko's route across west face. Denis Urubko

the rocks of the ridge looked sinister. And I could not forget my friend Sergey Samoilov, who died in 2009. [Editor's note: Samoilov and Urubko climbed new routes in alpine style on Broad Peak in 2005 and Manaslu in 2006. He died in the spring of 2009 during a Kazakh expedition attempting the Everest-Lhotse traverse.] On May 15 when I reached the South Col alone and pitched my tent at 7,900m, all these negative thoughts were in my mind.

At dawn on the 16th I decided to go down, but having passed the Geneva Spur I realized I was not doing the right thing. I sat in the wind, thinking for several minutes. There was a real chance to