

were reasonable yet sustained (V to VI) on excellent granite. The crux pitch entailed VII climbing and A3 hooking. No bolts were placed on the route. (*High Mountain Sports* 188)

COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

Khan Tengri, Attempt, Tragedy, and New Route. It was reported that Yuri Krasnoukhov was attempting the standard route on Khan Tengri in mid-August, 1997, and while climbing from the CIII ice cave to the summit fell down the south flank and died. D. Komarov and V. Shamalo climbed up on August 17 to locate the body via the Southwest Face. They found Krasnoukhov's body, then continued on to the summit via a new route. The crux proved to be steep slabs on the upper part of the route, which was graded 5B. The climb placed third in the Russian championships. (*High Mountain Sports* 188)

TIBET

CHOLA SHAN

Chola Shan Range, Various Ascents. In July and August, 1997, Joanne Jeske and I traveled widely throughout Kham, the old eastern province of Tibet. With the exception of Minya Konka and vicinity, this region has largely been neglected by climbers, despite the fact that it is one of the most mountainous areas of Asia.

Traveling by local buses, we arrived in the town of Dege in early August. Here we stocked



The northwest face of Chola Shan I. Solid line indicates ascent route. Dotted line indicates hidden finish to summit and descent. CHARLIE FOWLER

up on food and fuel, then backtracked eastward along the main highway from Lhasa to Chengdu to the sacred lake of Lhamcoka. This pristine lake is situated below the main peaks of the 100-kilometer-long Chola Shan. The highest peak of the range (6168m) was climbed by a large expedition of Chinese and Japanese mountaineers in 1988 from a base camp at the south end of the lake.

Joanne and I approached differently, hiking up a steep valley about four kilometers to the west of the lake. We established a base camp (5000m) at the toe of a glacier plateau, directly below the second highest peak of the range, Chola Shan II (6119m). Starting in the middle of the night and climbing alone, I made a rapid ascent of this peak, arriving at the summit at sunrise. The route was mostly non-technical; I wandered up the broad glacier and onto the southeast ridge, which was followed to the top. I returned via the same route. This was perhaps the first ascent of the peak. I also got a good look at the northwest face of the highest peak, Chola Shan I, from the top. This was to be my next objective.

After some rest and a recon with Joanne, I again set off alone and at night for Chola Shan I. The bottom third of the route was a 45° snow and ice slope that led to the main business of the route, a wide gully winding to the south face. Conditions were excellent and I made good progress, overcoming sections of 80° ice and wandering a bit to avoid mixed sections. Firm snow on the south face led to the summit, which I reached in the early morning. After leaving a few prayer flags, I descended the north face/ridge, which proved to be more difficult and time-consuming than the climb. It would have been better to just descend the route! Overall, the route was a classic snow and ice outing, of modest scale (800m from glacier to summit) and moderate difficulty. There are many other fine rock and alpine routes in this area.

CHARLIE FOWLER, *unaffiliated*

QIONGLAI SHAN

Qionglai Range, Various Ascents. In late August, 1997, I returned to the Siguniang Shan area of the Qionglai Range, on the eastern edge of the Tibetan Plateau. I had previously visited and climbed in this area (see 1996 AAJ, p. 310). Accompanied by Joanne Jeske, I hiked up the Changping Valley and revisited a base camp I had used in 1994. Then, I had climbed two of three peaks in a group north of the main Siguniang massif. On this occasion I made a solo ascent of the third peak, via the south ridge, which was mostly rock scrambling. This peak, at about 5700 meters, appears to be the highest of the three. I descended the same way. In the future this whole area should become very popular with climbers, as there are unlimited possibilities for rock and alpine routes on fairly low-altitude peaks, and with very easy access from the city of Chengdu. Indeed, many routes have now been done here.

CHARLIE FOWLER, *unaffiliated*

Gurla Range, Ascents and Other Activity. Our team consisted of Tom Simons, Quinn Simons, Soren Peters and myself as guide. Our main objective was Gurla Mondata (7700m), the third-highest peak in Tibet, located in the west near the frontier with India and Nepal.

We flew to Lhasa in early September, 1997, where we spent a week making preparations and sightseeing. We did several hikes to acclimate, including an ascent of the sacred Gephel Ri (17,000+') above Drepung Monastery. In addition, we left Lhasa with a staff of Tibetans