

I was sleeping at a camp half an hour from theirs, and when my alarm failed to go off, the two climbed "Peak Ljosh" (ca. 4600m, named for our cook) via the north face (III A13/4 5.8, 600m), finding some steep ice and loose rock on their ascent.

After resting in BC for a day, we returned to ABC for a try at the north face of Kizil Asker. On the 25th we ascended to ca. 4800m via the glaciated slopes and bivied in a crevasse. The next morning we began climbing, encountering a 400-meter traverse on 50° snow that brought us to the col between the north ridge and the summit. White-out conditions forced us to wait in an ice cave and then later at the col for two hours. When visibility ceased altogether, we decided to descend, and continued down to ABC, arriving in the evening. That night, a storm deposited a foot and a half of snow. I returned to BC the next morning, followed by Sean a few hours later. The others remained at ABC.

The weather the next day was the calmest we had seen on the trip. I remained in BC with illness. Guy had started out to solo the west face of Panfilovski Division, but had felt ill as well and returned to his tent. (Bad mutton remains the suspect.) Carlos and Mark began up a mixed line on the west face of Peak Carnovsky. When Mark lost the bolt from the head of one of his tools, the pair, who had only three ice screws, began moving quite slowly, and endured an open bivy in a chimney on a small ledge. The next day they continued the one and a half pitches to easy terrain which they followed to the top of the ridge. On the descent, they rappelled near the line of ascent, getting their ropes stuck twice and reaching ABC at 8 p.m.

That same day, Sean and Guy climbed the peak we had tried at the beginning of the trip, reaching the top (ca. 5000m) via the west gully/north shoulder and naming the mountain Peak Gronky. They returned to BC that day, followed by Carlos and Mark the next morning. The truck had already arrived, and we loaded it for departure and left by 5 p.m.

CHRISTIAN BECKWITH, *The Wayward Mountaineers*

Kokshaal-Tau, Various Ascents. From July 18-August 26, the united team of Moscow district climbed in the West Kokshaal-Tau. The chief of the expedition was Boris Starostin; the trainers were Fedor Akhmatov, Valerii Boiko, Victor Efimov and Eugeny Monaenkov. The 25 members of the expedition traveled to Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, by train. We then traveled to Lake Isykkul by bus, then drove to Base Camp over two days in two light passenger lorries. After the last military checkpoint, we traveled the final 25 kilometers in the wide valley along the Uzen-Gush River. This was only possible in the morning when the water was low. Due to the skillful navigation of our drivers, we were able to place our camp at ca. 3500 meters near the Grivoriev Glacier at the confluence of the Uzen-Gush River and the river from the Palgov Glacier.

We made first ascents on seven summits of this valley during the expedition. The team of F. Akhmatov made perhaps the first ascent (5B) of Peak Chon-Turasu (5780m, a.k.a. Dzholdash) and climbed Peak 5013m from the east. The team of E. Manaenko traversed Peak Kryl'ya Sovetov (5B, 5450m) Peaks 4758m (4A) and 5200m (4B); the only previous attempt was in 1938. The team of V. Efimov made ascents of Peaks 4530m (2A) and 4825m (5A). A new route (5B) to the summit of Dankova (5986m, the highest peak of the region) was made by a team led by V. Boiko. The two previous ascents were made in 1972. Boiko's team also climbed Peak 4730m.

On August 12, on the first ascent of Peak Cosmos (a.k.a. Schmidta, 5940m) via the north face, Igor Korsun was killed. All the group was covered by ice fall. All but Korsun incurred

only bruises. Korsun suffered a fracture at the base of his skull. He did not regain consciousness and died two hours later. We lowered his body over two days to Base Camp. After this, the expedition was called off.

VIKTOR EFIMOV, *Russia*

Chonturasu Glacier Area, Various Ascents. In September, Pat Littlejohn followed up his 1997 guided expedition to the Chonturasu Glacier at the eastern end of the West Kokshaal-Tau with a second International School of Mountaineering trip, this time to the valley immediately east of the Komarova and visited briefly by his 1997 expedition. In contrast to the previous year, the weather was quite poor, with much heavy snowfall. The party climbed four easy snow peaks within striking distance of Base Camp before deciding to cut short their activities in the region.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Alpine Climbing Group*

TIBET

Yebokangal Ri and Porong Ri, Ascents. We were Reinier Zuidhoff, leader; Hans Van Der Meulen, Wilco Van Rooijen, Cas Van De Gevel (all Dutch), Thierry Schmitter (F) and Marko Prezelj (SLO). Schmitter and I planned to climb a new route on the south face of Shishapangma; the two rope teams of Zuidhoff and Van Der Meulen, and Van Rooijen and Van De Gevel wanted to repeat one of the established routes on the south face. We planned to act independently once we left Base Camp.

On April 8, we reached Nyalam, starting point for the three- to four-day trek to Shishapangma's south face BC. On April 9, we went with the local yak men to check the conditions in the approach valley. Deep snow made it impossible for the yaks to leave Nyalam. After asking for porters, the Chinese LO told us that we would need to pay 1000 yuan for insurance for each porter. That was not acceptable to us, so they offered us transportation to the north side of the mountain, site of BC for the normal route on Shishapangma. It was not a good substitute for the south face, as we had no information about the north side. Regardless, we accepted, and were first at BC on April 16.

Thierry and I decided to act as "alpine" as possible—that is, no troubling over mountain names and altitudes, just "see, go and climb." After a fast acclimatization on the north ridge from the glacier up to 6500 meters, we decided to climb the first mountain on the west side of Shishapangma. On April 20, we crossed the glacier below the east face of Porong Ri. The next morning, we left our tent and began our climb of the face. In six hours we climbed a new route on the east face to the northeast ridge, which we followed for the last 150 meters to the east summit of Porong Ri. I reached the east summit (7284m) in very strong wind; Thierry turned back 50 meters from the summit. We descended via the northeast ridge, where we found some fixed ropes (the ridge had been climbed in May, 1982, by a 14-member Japanese expedition that used three camps), then continued to our tent and on to BC the same day. The 1000-meter route has ice and snow with one short rock section. On the upper section, we found hard ice up to 60° covered with dry snow. The difficulty of the route is akin to the Austrian route on Les Courtes in the French Alps.

After six days of rest in unstable weather with strong winds, we left BC on April 28 for the next climb. This time we wanted to climb to the west summit (7332m) of Yebokangal Ri