



Yebokangal Ri (a.k.a. Jebo Kangri) showing the line of ascent and descent (ending in tracks in foreground). The northwest face of Shishapangma is in the background. MARKO PREZELJ

weather become much better in the second part of May, and they, along with most of the members from many expeditions this season in BC, reached the summit.

Ours was the second ascent, via a new route, of Yebokangal Ri, and possibly the first ascent of the west summit and first traverse of the mountain. Our new route on Porong Ri was the third ascent of the mountain. Of the crowd of more than 100 “climbers” in Shishapangma BC this season, we were the only ones to do something other than the normal route. Some of the “conquerors” expressed surprise that we did not have a strong desire for the summit itself. Some of them didn’t even know that there were mountains other than Shishapangma. That was a completely new experience for me. I think that the normal route on Shishapangma is totally commercialized; you can buy entire altitude camps from the expeditions that are leaving BC.

MARKO PREZELJ, *Planinska zveza Slovenije*

NYANGLA QEN TANGLA SHAN RANGE

Sepu Kunglha Karpo Massif, Various Activity. The Nyangla Qen Tangla Shan in Eastern Tibet is topped by Sepu Kangri (6950m). After first seeing Sepu Kangri in 1982 from a plane while flying from Chengdu to Lhasa, I finally reached the area in 1996 and led another expedition to attempt the peak in 1997 (see 1998 AAJ, pp. 348-351). We returned in the autumn of 1998. Charles Clarke and Elliot Robertson set out three weeks before the rest of the team to find a route into the Sepu Kangri massif from the east. It was a particularly heavy monsoon and as a result they were unable to make their approach around the southern aspect of the Nyangla Qen Tangla Shan, but were forced to take the northern route through Nakchu and Chamdo. They reached Base Camp on August 30, two days after the main climbing party left the U.K. They

crossed into the Yang Valley, to the west of Sepu Kangri, to get views of that aspect of the mountain before coming down to meet us at Khinda to make arrangements for our walk-in. We finally got away from the roadhead on September 10, having hauled all the expedition baggage across the river on a wire pulley. We established Base Camp on September 13, by which time the weather seemed to have settled. Our four-man climbing team consisted of Graham Little, Scott Muir, Victor Saunders and myself. In addition, we had a media team planning to film a fly-on-the-wall documentary of the expedition and also to send news reports back by satellite. We had had satellite communications the previous year, had run a web site from Base Camp and were planning to do the same in 1998. All of us had had mixed feelings about such instant communication, but the trip had been so expensive that sponsorship was essential and that meant television coverage. A web site is also attractive to sponsors. We ended up enjoying our communications, both as a means of keeping contact with home and also as a means of communication over which we had full creative control.

Victor and I both wanted to have a further look at "Fotheringham's Ridge and Corridor," which I had recce'd the year before with Jim Fotheringham as a possible outflanking route. Whilst Graham and Scott made an unsuccessful attempt on Chomo Mangyal ("the Wife of Sepu"), Victor and I invited Elliot to join us on a recce. From a camp on the moraine just below the ridge, we reached the crest on September 20. It was a perfect day and we could see there was a straight-forward, relatively safe route up into the Western Cwm of Sepu Kangri and on to the summit. At the same time, Graham and Scott had discovered that snow conditions on steep ground were particularly dangerous, a strong disincentive against attempting their objective, the "Frendo Spur."

After a rest, we all set out on our first attempt. Victor and I invited Elliot to join us. The route through the seracs and crevasses of the Corridor proved fairly straight-forward and we camped at the edge of the Western Cwm at a height of 6150 meters. The Western Cwm was an easy walk and we decided to tackle the west ridge of the final summit mass, the northwest ridge leading down to Seamo Uylmitok showing signs of wind-slab avalanche. That night we camped at 6530 meters. We were within striking distance of the summit and needed just one more fine morning to make a successful bid. Once again we were out of luck. It started snowing that afternoon and kept on for the next three days. We retreated on the second day.

A week later we returned to the fray, but discovered that over a meter of snow had fallen. We only had three pairs of snow shoes between us and, as I was going slower than the others, we decided that Elliot and I should drop back to enable the other three to make a final attempt for the summit. They set out on October 10 from our second camp. It was a fine clear dawn. Graham was worried about the amount of snow and consequent risk of avalanche and therefore opted to turn back just short of our original top camp. Once on his own, his eyes were drawn to the back of Seamo Uylmitok, which beckoned from the other side of the Western Cwm, and he decided to snatch it before going down. It provided a straight-forward climb.

In the meantime, Scott and Victor reached the site of Camp III. Since it was still early and the weather was clear, they carried on up the mountain. The quality of the snow improved dramatically and they made good progress over a large bergschrund and up to the crest of the final summit ridge, reaching a height of 6830 meters, 150 meters below and about a quarter of a mile from the top. Visibility was down to a few meters and the wind was savage. On our radio call we had just given them an up-to-date forecast from the Met Office in England that the following morning was going to be fine. In view of this they decided to return to Camp III, hoping to make it to the summit early the next day. Once again we were out of luck. The weather



Bonington, Saunders and Robertson on their way up the western cwm between camps II and III with Mount Sepu in the background. CHRIS BONINGTON PICTURE LIBRARY

never recovered and after two nights they descended to Base Camp.

By then we had run out of time, but we had at least discovered a reasonable route to the summit. There are also a wealth of other climbs to be had in this fascinating area, both on the north and southern side of the mountain. The site of Base Camp is particularly attractive and our neighbors became good friends. It is an area I would strongly recommend to anyone attracted to exploratory climbing.

CHRIS BONINGTON, *Alpine Climbing Group*

CHINA

Mustagh Ata, Gasherbrum II, and Other Activity in the Chinese Karakoram. Our expedition was co-led by Daniel Mazur and Jonathan Otto. On June 29, we set out from Kathmandu, Nepal, to Islamabad, Pakistan, across India by rail with 600 kilograms of mountaineering equipment. An in-progress war of nuclear detente was currently in full swing between India and Pakistan, which made the border crossings interesting. On July 20, our bus crossed from Pakistan into China via the Khunjerab Pass on the Karakoram Highway. On July 21, a four-hour, camel-supported trek from the highway into the Chinese Pamirs brought us to Mustagh Ata's clean, comfortable, grassy, well-organized, permanently established north side Base Camp at 4350 meters. On August 3, Ellen Miller led the way to the summit (7546m) in a wind-blown whiteout, with Angela McCormick and Daniel Mazur in tow. That afternoon, they telemark skied down from the summit and reached Base Camp.

By August 10, 11 of our team members (including Frank Pitula, Clint Rogers, Steven Ross, Patricia Peterson and Howard Yee) had reached the summit, either on foot, snowshoe, or ski. Richard Bothwell made a snowboard descent on August 9. Upon departure, we exchanged all