



Point 6262m, a.k.a. Milarepa Peak. CARLOS BUHLER

short, exposed, granite west ridge. The climbing was not difficult, but several steep steps were tricky due to the newly fallen snow. I descended the east flank, a simple scree slope, and circled around the peak to the south. On September 23-24, all three of us hiked back up to the top of Pt. 5610m by the easy eastern scree slopes and spent the night a few meters under the summit for acclimatization. On September 26 and 28, following a line up an ice rib on the east end of the north face of Menlungtse, we fixed

about 600 meters of 7- and 9mm line to a small, safe bivouac spot at the base of a 20-meter rock wall. Working as a threesome, we were able to carry up food and gear to the bivouac spot for a planned seven- to ten-day alpine-style ascent of the remaining 1600 meters of the peak. A nine-day storm ensued. So much snow fell that huge crown fractures were visible all along the top slopes of the north face of Menlungtse. On October 8, we made the decision to abandon the climb. Much less snow had accumulated on the two mountains north of Menlungtse, and we changed our objective to the unclimbed point 6262 meters.

On October 12 at 5 a.m., we three set off up the east face of point 6262m from a col (5550m) between it and another smaller peak. It was an ice face with a short mixed section at the bottom and another just under the summit. Not far up the face, Andrew decided to withdraw from the route. The face was about 50 degrees in overall steepness, and the ice climbing was moderate. Only the last two mixed pitches to the top were time consuming. At 3:30 p.m. we stood on the exposed, corniced summit, the junction of three steep ice ridges. The descent went quickly with two 60-meter ropes. Due to the threatening weather front approaching, we had rigged rappel anchors all the way up the route. By 7:30 p.m., we were back at the col. The following day, we descended to BC without urgency. On October 16, we left BC for the two-day return hike to Tsambouche Village.

We named point 6262m "Milarepa Peak" after the well-known Tibetan yogi and saint who died about 900 years ago in the Rongshar Valley. Milarepa's last days were spent in the sacred caves at the base of point 6262m, only a few hundred feet from the renowned Chuar Monastery.

CARLOS BUHLER

Chomo Lönzö, Attempt. The object of the expedition was the first ascent of Chomo Lönzö's Middle Peak via the southwest face and northwest ridge. We were Eduard Birnbacher (leader, Germany), Walter Hölzler and Stefan Wiebel from Germany and Manfred Feil from Italy. Because of problems with the trekking agency, liaison officer and yak owners, we failed to reach the south side of Chomo Lönzö (a six- to seven-day approach). At Kharta (the start of the trekking), we had to deposit half of the climbing equipment and food because of the exorbitant costs for the yaks. We did not have enough animals for the approach. All these circumstances left us no opportunity to climb the peak.

After five days' trekking we reached our new goal: the north face. Because of inadequate climbing equipment or food for the face and bad weather, the expedition failed to climb our

new objective. After days on the mountain, I decided to abandon the expedition. My friends reached an altitude about 6100 meters on the north face.

EDUARD BIRNBACHER, *Deutscher Alpenverein*

Shishapangma, Southwest Face, Attempt and Tragedy. The idea behind this trip was to go over to the Himalaya with a group of friends and ski an 8000-meter peak. About half of the 14 8000ers have been skied by various lines, with the world-wide total being roughly ten to 20 individual descents off of the summits. Shishapangma has been skied via the regular route, but never by the steeper southwest side. The line that we were attempting, the Swiss/Polish Route, seemed to be a perfect candidate for a ski descent. It is a direct, continuously steep line with the hardest technical section being near the bottom. Our plan was to take our time getting up to a high advanced base camp, then do successively higher day skiing trips until we were acclimatized enough to climb and ski the route in a one-day push. If this didn't look like it was going to work out, plan B was to put a camp in somewhere on the route and do it as a two- to three-day outing.

Right from the start, this was an expensive trip and we were very fortunate that The North Face and MountainZone.com became major sponsors. We were also awarded a \$6,000 grant through the Polartech Challenge, which helped defray many of the incidental costs along the way. As part of The North Face sponsorship, we agreed to make a film out of the outing through American Adventure Productions that was to be shown on NBC as part of a five-part series. This necessitated three more people on the trip: Kent Harvey, Michael Brown and David Bridges, who were not only excellent at their jobs but very experienced mountaineers and a great asset to the team.

Team members Andrew McLean (leader), Mark Holbrook, Alex Lowe, Kris Erickson, Hans Saari, Conrad Anker, David Bridges, Michael Brown and Kent Harvey arrived in Kathmandu on September 14 and spent four days there adjusting and doing last-minute provisioning before setting out to the north to cross into Tibet. After spending a night at the filthy border town of Kodari (where we picked up a few stomach bugs), we crossed into Tibet the next morning and were met by our CMA Liaison Officer and interpreter. The next stop was the outpost town of Nyalam, where we spent another day or so coordinating loads and yaks before finally setting out on the 15-mile approach to Base Camp at roughly 16,000 feet. As none of us had ever been there, we made the strategic error of letting the yak herders set the pace. The first day we did a placid three to five miles with about a 500-foot elevation gain. The next day, with all of our bivy gear loaded onto the yaks, they busted out ten miles and 4,000 feet of gain, which left some of us reeling with altitude sickness soon after arriving at BC. I hung in there for a few hours before recognizing the early signs of pulmonary edema and heading down with Alex and Michael in the middle of the night to spend four days recouping in Nyalam.

By the time I was able to return, the rest of the team had cleaned up BC, built a beautiful chorten and done a few short ski outings. With the snowline at above 18,000 feet, it required a major effort to do skiing day trips from BC. On one occasion, we were able to climb and ski a formation known as The Ice Tooth. A few days later, we split up and skied some of the stunning higher flanks surrounding Shishapangma but only made it to about the 21,000-foot level before turning around due to poor weather.

Advanced Base Camp, which required a grueling effort to get to from BC, was a plush haven of soft, flat sand located right at the base of the south face. On October 4, after two to