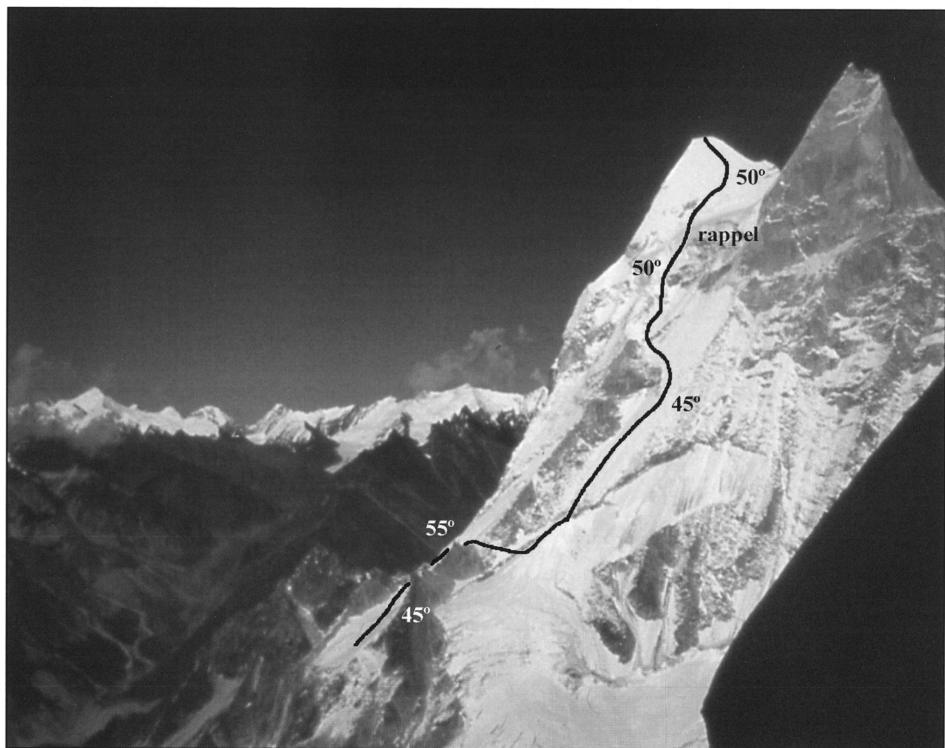


mit on the sharp crest between Meru South and North. The majority of these attempts had concentrated on the northeast rib, which finishes up the spectacular granite prow of the Shark's Fin and is by far the most compelling line on the peak.

Babanov and his wife Olya arrived at Tapovan Base Camp (4270m) at the end of April. More or less following the line taken on all previous attempts, Babanov climbed the huge snow/ice slope to the right of the initial rocky rib, then beneath the "Black Wall" traversed up left along a ramp to reach the crest. The weather was poor and Babanov reached a high point during mid May of ca 5800m before retreating because of dangerous avalanche conditions. He returned in August and summited solo on September 22 following an easier but loose line to the right of his earlier attempt. Babanov named the route, Shangri La, and graded it Alpine ED F5c/6a A1/A2 M5 and 75-degree ice. He was later awarded the French Piolet d'Or prize for 2001. His full account appears earlier in this *Journal*.

BASED ON REPORTS FROM VALERI BABANOV

Meru South (6660m), east face attempt. On September 17 a six-member Spanish team led by Jordi Corominas established base camp below the south and highest summit of the Meru Group. Advanced base was later established at 4900m and an attempt made on the unclimbed east face/ridge. On October 2 the climbers reached 6100m but were forced down. A second



The first ski descent of Shivling—the "Matterhorn of the Himalaya"—via a line close to the west arête. The rappel was 80 meters long, and the 50-degree slopes below it were sustained. *Emmanuel Ratouis*

attempt, which took place on October 6 and 7, fared slightly better and a height of 6400m was achieved. Serious stone fall prevented them from completing the climb.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

Shivling (6543m), first ski descent. Emmanuel Ratouis led a three-member team, which reached the summit via the west ridge in a 20-hour push from base camp over May 7-8. Ratouis then made the first ski descent of the mountain. Apart from an 80-meter section which he rappelled, he skied all the way, negotiating slopes up to 55 degrees. He took off his skis just 10 minutes walk above base camp. Two other expeditions also summited via the west ridge during the spring.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

Bhagirathi III (6454m), attempt. The four-man German team of Robert Jasper, Walter Hölzler, and Rainer Trepppe with cameraman Jochen Schmoll planned to climb the true crest of the south-west pillar, left of the 1982 Barton-Fyffe Route. The climbers established an advanced base during early May in the glacier bay below the west face. They then climbed the left (north) side of the lower crest to place a portaledge camp on the obvious snow patch at around half-height on the pillar. However, bad weather and an early monsoon dogged their efforts and they eventually had to give up in early June after Holzer and Trepppe had reached a high point of ca 5800m, just 100 meters or so short of the end of the major rock climbing difficulties.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

Chaukhamba I (7138m), attempts and tragedy. In May a 14-member team from Calcutta led by Brijes Dey attempted the north face of this high mountain, approaching from Badrinath and Mana. They found the huge face very avalanche prone, with many large crevasses barring their way. The attempt was given up. In September another Indian team led by Ujjwal Ganguly also attempted the normal route on the north face. On the 14th four members made a summit attempt from Camp 3 at 6350m. This failed and two members returned down the mountain on the following day when the weather turned bad. Palash Mukherjee and Serabjit Sadhu remained and made a second attempt on the 16th, when the weather improved. However, once again they decided to retreat and began descending at around 10:30 a.m., when the sun had already softened the snow slopes. Within an hour they were engulfed by an avalanche, which was witnessed from Camp 1. Although the Indo-Tibet Border Police sent in helicopters on the 22nd to search for the missing climbers, the two bodies were never located.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

CENTRAL GARHWAL

Shri Parvat, attempt and Bhagat Peak, ascent. Rajesh Gadgil's nine member team from Bombay planned to attempt the second ascent of the beautiful 6175m fluted snow peak, Shri Parvat, which rises from the Deo Dekhni Plateau west of Mana-Badrinath and has not been climbed since its original ascent in 1934 by Eric Shipton and Bill Tilman. Base camp was established at