

would repeat itself. Luckily none were killed or even seriously injured, though Klein was briefly knocked unconscious by stone fall and two other members were carried inside their tent 250 meters down to the bottom of the face, when an avalanche struck their camp.

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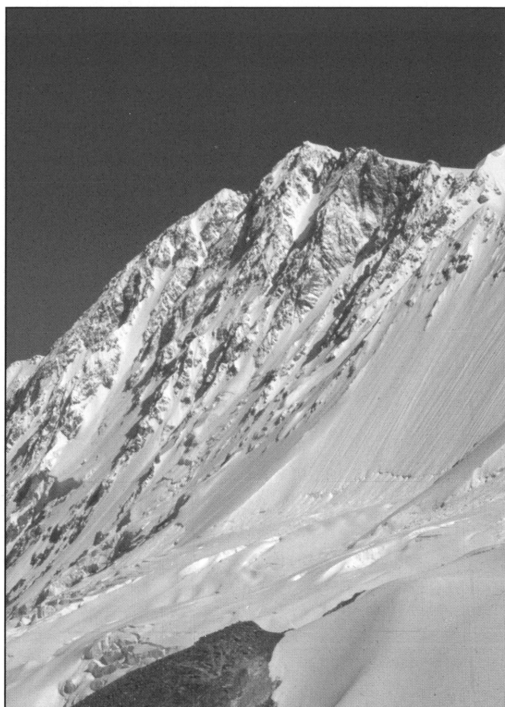
*For information on Everest from the south side, see the Nepal reports.*

*Shishapangma, southwest face, fast solo ascent and soloing/single-push history.* It is easy to lose perspective in the Himalaya. Base camps bulge with expeditions, routes are choked with climbers and the once-pervasive feeling of isolation can be replaced by claustrophobia. On May 23, 2001 I guided clients to the summit of Everest. Eighty nine folks reached the top that day, setting a new record. Although I was among the first 1,100 individuals to summit that peak, it seemed like I was crammed in a very well-refrigerated subway car.

After that experience, I decided to seek solitude in one of the most beautiful places in the Himalaya. On September 9, 2001, I crossed the border into Tibet and headed back to Shishapangma, arriving at base camp in the midst of a stormy day. I had been here before, in October 1999, after climbing Cho Oyu, when on the first morning at base camp an avalanche had roared down the face, claiming the lives of Dave Bridges and Alex Lowe. For the next week high winds and snowstorms had torn at the peak. With little hope of conditions improving, our small expedition had packed up and headed back to Nepal. In 2001 my hope was to climb the Polish-Swiss route, which was in bad shape (and apparently had been for a few years). The three expeditions lining up on the British Route were the only other teams on the face.

I turned my attention to a variation of the British descent route. Carrying a light pack, I began the climb at 10:50 a.m. on September 19. Unroped and 1,000 feet up the icy 60-degree face, I broke an ice axe, shearing the bolt and rendering it useless. Nine rappels later I was on terrain gentle enough to downclimb.

On September 23, I set off again for the summit. The poor conditions I encountered on my first attempt persuaded me to head for the British Route, where I could take advantage of fixed ropes to aid my descent. I left ABC (19,350') at 3:40 p.m. After climbing 7,000 vertical feet on 50- to 70-degree névé, rock, and ice, I reached the main summit at 9 a.m. on the 24th. The descent would prove to be more exciting



The south face of Shishapangma. At least a half-dozen routes ascend most of the visible features. *Chris Warner*

than the ascent. A fog bank rolled up to the face, light snow began to fall, and far above the security of the fixed ropes I was caught in a total whiteout. I criss-crossed the 50- to 60-degree couloir seven times before I finally found the ropes, then continued the interminable descent by rappelling for almost 3,500 feet. I returned to my tent at ABC at 10 p.m., 34 hours after beginning the climb.

The southwest face of Shishapangma is quite important within the development of non-stop ascents of 8000m peaks. In 1990 Loretan and Troillet climbed a new route to the central summit in 16 hours. Kurtyka, who was climbing with them, reached the central summit in 22 hours. Kurtyka bivouacked on his descent, while the Swiss returned to the base of the mountain in one push.

In 1993 Wielicki soloed a new route to the right of the British route, reaching the summit in one day. Earlier, he recorded a similar single push ascent on Broad Peak by the Normal route (in 1984 he climbed from base camp to the summit in 16 hours)

Last September Kobi Reichen of Switzerland set off for the summit at mid-day on the 23rd. He stopped at Camp 1 for four to five hours, where he joined two friends to continue up to the summit. They all reached the top about one hour before I did. Reichen and I both climbed via the British route, both having the fastest times yet on that route. I was about 40 minutes quicker, but Kobi was obviously stronger, as he actually moved much faster than I.

As far as I know, this ascent is the first American solo of an 8,000-meter peak. In 1990 George Lowe climbed from Camp 2 to the summit of Dhaulagiri solo. About two days after my ascent of Shishapangma Marty Schmidt soloed the regular route on Cho Oyu in 13 hours (in 1996 Russel Brice from New Zealand soloed Cho Oyu in 11 hours).

In the mid 1980s a handful of climbers brought the single push style from the Alps to the 8000-meter peaks. Since then folks like Wielicki, Troillet, Chamoux, Babu Chirri, and Kammerlander have been literally running up peaks. Does this diminish the accomplishment of the clients I've guided to the summit of Everest? Absolutely not. Each person has their own limits. And each person should exercise their own tolerance for risk. If I didn't go out and run up the southwest Face of Shishapangma, I'd always be wondering what my limits are.

CHRIS WARNER, AAC

*Nojin Kangsang, probable first ascent of west ridge.* On August 15 Aumi Nozawai, Shinichi Miyagawa, and Masao Saito from a six-member Himalayan Association of Japan expedition led by 61-year-old Kunimitsu Sakai, made the probable fourth ascent of 7191m Nojin Kangsang via the west ridge. The team established base camp on July 29 at 4800m on the west flank of the mountain and then placed three camps on the west ridge. The west ridge flanks the north side of the Togolung Glacier and rises directly to the summit.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*

*Nojin Kangsang, attempt from the north.* During August 2000 the Japanese climber, Tadakiyo Sakahara, made the first ascent of the East Ridge as reported in AAJ 2001. The 56-year-old mountaineer returned in 2001 and set up base camp once again on the eastern side of the peak. He then moved around to the north, where he tried to open a new route. However, although he succeeded in making the first ascent of Gama I (6484m) en route, he was unable to continue on to the summit of Nojin Kangsang.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA, *Japanese Alpine News*