



Peak 41 (6,654m), showing the route of its first ascent. The lower left is a snow gully, behind the ridge is a plateau, and looming above is the west face. Urban Golob

6,500m. Next morning, still in cold wind and terrible snow conditions, we needed another hour and a half to climb the exposed ridge (50°–65°) above the west face and reach the summit of Peak 41 (6,654m). After several abseils and downclimbing, we reached our tents on the plateau below the face that evening.

The same day (October 16) the other party (Ales Kovac, Matej Kovacic, and Bostjan Jezovsek) reached only 6,000m on the north ridge due to very soft snow. They rested the next day on the plateau and on October 18 they went on the face and climbed a new route to the right of our party's line. When they reached the same col left of the summit (6,500m) at 4 p.m., they were caught by a strong snow storm, so they went down immediately. After some problems with avalanches on their descent, they successfully reached the tents on the plateau late in the night and the next day came down to the base camp.

After four previous unsuccessful expeditions to Peak 41 (Japanese, Finnish-American, New Zealand, and Finnish), the Slovenian expedition managed to climb two new routes on the west face of Peak 41 and reached the summit of the virgin mountain. Both of the routes are 1,000m high (from the plateau) and rated at V, 4 or TD+ (55°–80°) with a climbing approach to the plateau (500m, 40°–70°), so all together 1,500m of climbing. For more information, visit: <http://41.ice-climbing.net>.

URBAN GOLOB, Slovenia

*Kyajo Ri, first recorded ascent of newly opened peak.* Sitting at home in front of the computer for a week with a broken leg can be a wonderful source of inspiration. So it was for me in January 2002. The Nepalese government had just opened 103 new peaks for climbing. My wife, Véronique Marché-Wilson, and I chose Kyajo Ri (6,186m), only three long days' walk from Lukla. Kyajo Ri is the highest point in the massif that rises to the north of Namche Bazaar, only 20 miles west of

Everest. Talking about our plans among friends soon had Julien Ferrera, Laurent Beurel, and Véronique's brother Vincent Marché joining in (all French).

We set up base camp a little above Machhermo village. After the puja ceremony we set off up the steep rocky slopes at the end of the cwm to establish camp 1 at the foot of the east face, 5,200m. The next day we gained access to the glacier lying at the foot of the east face via a 40m mixed step, climbed the glacier to the rimaye, and overcame a 100m mixed step to reach the southeast col and camp 2.

October 20, 1 a.m., -20°C, full moon. We set off, only to return four hours later, unable to find a way through the south face to the southwest ridge. A quick tea, and Vincent and I headed off again, this time losing altitude to reach the Kyajo Glacier, south of Kyajo Ri. By 8 a.m. we'd reached the southwest col at 5,700m. Roping up for the first time, we could see a glistening 50° ridge of snow and ice leading to the summit. A few steeper sections (60°–65°) promised sport along



The unclimbed northeast aspect of Kyajo Ri. The 2002 route on the south flank is left of this rocky face. Duncan Wilson



High on Kyajo Ri, where the glacier gives way to rock. Duncan Wilson

the way, especially where a rock buttress appears near the top.

The going was delicate in places, the ice thin and porous. Climbing together with two tools each, occasionally placing the deadman for protection, we took the rock buttress at 6,050m in order to avoid the rotten snow-ice as it steepened to over 70° above. We traversed east across the buttress then followed its right edge up a steep snow field to reach the summit in three pitches. From the sharp snow arête on the summit an impressive view extends in all directions, from Everest to Thamserku and Cho Oyu. After an hour on the summit, we began our descent at 3 p.m., leaving a string of prayer flags fluttering in the slight breeze.

Night soon fell and the temperature plummeted to -25°C. Our toes suffered a little frost nip but the full moon and the sight of bobbing headtorches coming to greet us soon warmed our spirits. We were back in camp 2 by 9 p.m., happily reunited with our friends just as a violent wind storm began. The next day's 1,200m descent to base camp would be long. Route Information: southwest ridge, named En Tente Cordiale. Location: Latitude: 27° 58' 03", Longitude: 86° 40' 58". Altitude: 6,186m (according to Schneider Map 'Khumbu Himal 1:50,000').

DUNCAN WILSON, U.K.

*Nuptse East 1, south face pillar attempt.* Snow conditions made climbing very difficult for a noted Russian mountaineer, Valeri Babanov (37), in his unsuccessful attempt at a solo ascent of a pillar on the south face of Nuptse, the lengthy mountain that stands immediately south of Everest. His aim was to make the first ascent of one of its eastern summits, which presents such difficulties that it was described as "only for Babanov" by Vladislav Terzyul, a highly successful Ukrainian climber who has summited 12 of the world's fourteen 8,000-meter peaks, including Dhaulagiri I last autumn.

Babanov arrived at his base camp on the Lhotse Nup Glacier at 5,200m on September 19, but new snowfall and avalanches prevented him from starting up the mountain until the 29th. His original plan was to fix 500m of rope on the lower part of the pillar, then go to acclimatize on the 1961 British south face route to an altitude of 6,900m before making his push for the top of the pillar in three or four days. He said before leaving Kathmandu for this climb that he expected it to be "the most challenging climb I have ever done." He would have to scale a vertical distance of 2,500m (8,000') from base camp to his goal, the summit known as Nuptse East I, which is 7,804m high on Nuptse's east ridge and only 57m lower than the main summit. Approximately 600m to 700m of Babanov's route would be highly technical, and then big snow mushrooms presented themselves above that.

Babanov had no official permit to climb the 1961 South Face route in addition to his pillar, so he devoted himself entirely to the pillar. He spent days moving up and down the pillar fixing 1,000m of rope until his supply was exhausted. He calculated that he would need to fix 200m more to overcome the steepest section, known as "le Diable" (the Devil), before attempting to go for the summit. Babanov reached an altitude of 6,300m at the bottom of the Diable on October 26, four weeks after he had begun his attack on the pillar. He now had no more rope and "was very, very tired," strong winds had started blowing, and he had other commitments elsewhere. So he abandoned the climb. He wants to return next autumn but not solo. He would like one friend to come with him, partly so he would not have to carry all the rope and other gear needed for this very technical route.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, Nepal