

seven hours from our ABC at 5,400m. The route was around alpine PD+/AD-. Out of respect to local sensitivities, we stopped a few meters short of the summit, and no fixed rope was left on the route.

Welch, Woodward, Hearn, Pearse, George and Gustavo Fierro-Carrion (Ecuador) also made the first ascent of Nikarchu Qilla (5,750m), which is located 3 km northeast of the unclimbed Nikurch Rama (5,995m). This alpine-style ascent was made by the southwest face from a camp at 5,200m at alpine F in about 7 hours, and the team also stopped a few meters below the summit.

ANDY PERKINS, *United Kingdom*

*Chiring We (6,599m), second ascent.* Chiring We is situated at the head of the Kalabaland glacier and is not frequently visited by mountaineers. The first ascent was achieved in 1979 by a team from Mumbai under the leadership of Harish Kapadia. The 12 member-team led by Martin Moran completed the second ascent 25 years later. They followed the west ridge (route of first ascent) after establishing four camps above base camp, and the summit was reached on 26th September. The nine summiteers were Martin Moran, Alex Moran, Jonathan Preston, Liam Warren, Paul Watson, Stuart Reid, Christopher Wheatley, Geoffrey Dawson and Christopher Harle.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

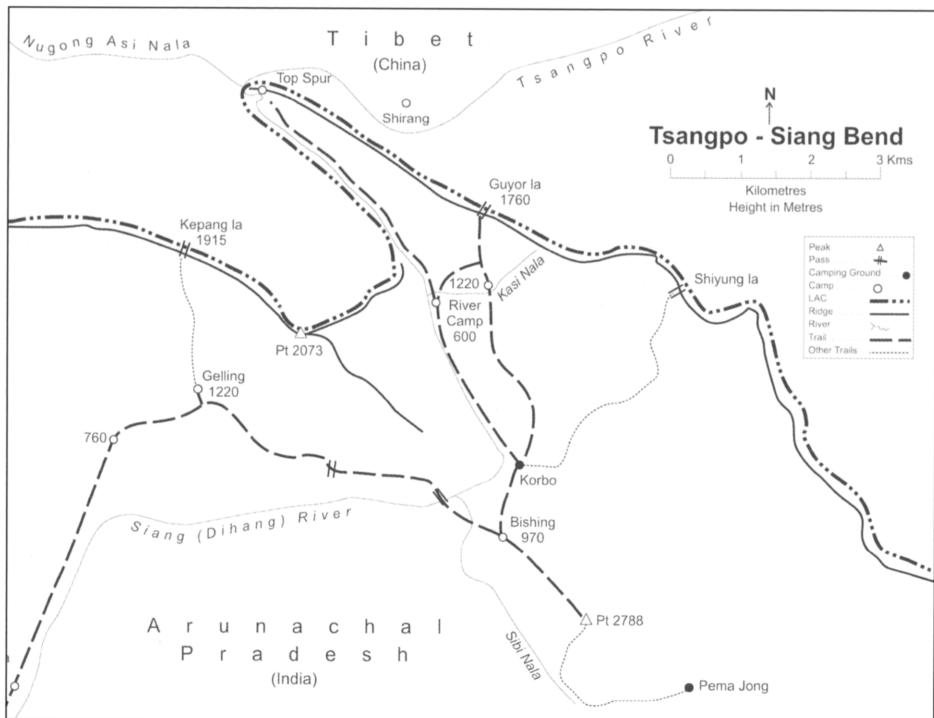
## SIKKIM

*Tingchen Kang (6,010 m), bureaucratic problems.* An Indian (Bengal) team led by AVM A. K. Bhattacharya and sponsored by the Himalayan Club from Kolkatta climbed this peak on 6th November. The summiteers were Subrata Chakraborty with Sherpa Pasang Phutar. They followed the northwest face. The team had an exciting journey and was walked out in bureaucratic hassles by the Sikkim Government. They paid Rs. 5000/- for the liaison officer but no LO turned out until the end. As per the current rules a LO is required both for foreign and Indian expeditions. The Sikkim Government has certainly made it difficult for mountaineers and trekkers. [This team probably used a new northwest approach to reach the upper west ridge, which was first climbed by an Indo-British Military expedition in 1998 and used by Roger Payne and Julie-Ann Clyma in spring 2005 for the peak's third ascent—Ed.]

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## EASTERN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

*Tsangpo Gorge, exploration from India.* Motup Chewang, Wing Cdr. V K Sashindran, and I traveled from the Brahmaputra along the Siang River to the Tsangpo Gorge where it enters the Indian territory. Though a few parties have explored the "Great Tsangpo Bend" in the north (Pemako area in Tibet) there are no records available of approaching the bend from India to the border of India-China. After the 1962 war with China the area was out of bounds. Now in 2004 a team of three Indians reached it from the Indian side, the entry point of the river into India, thus



The Tsangpo-Siang "S" Bend in the Arunachal Pradesh. *Harish Kapadia*

completing the final exploration of the Tsangpo.

The Tsangpo (as it is called in Tibet) originates near Lake Manasarovar at the foot of Kailash. After a long journey eastward via Lhasa, it reaches eastern Tibet. Here its progress is blocked by the great massifs Namcha Barwa and Gyala Peri. The river takes a huge turn between these peaks. This has been termed as the "Great Tsangpo Bend." It was the goal of several explorations from early days. The Pundit explorer Kinthup was one of the first to reach the gorge (in disguise) and he observed the "Rainbow Waterfall" where this mighty river falls. Here onwards the Tsangpo descends steeply southward on the Tibetan plateau to the Himalayan divide leading to the McMahon Line and India.

As the river enters Indian territory at 580m (in Arunachal Pradesh) it takes two "U" loops, which can be called the "Tsangpo/Siang Bend." In Arunachal Pradesh it is called by different names like the Siang and Dihang and is joined by various tributaries. On reaching the Assam plains it is joined by the Dibang and Lohit rivers and onward is called the Brahmaputra River. Due to the various names and vast terrain it covers, it had been a matter of discussion whether the Tsangpo is the same river as the Siang and whether it flows into the Brahmaputra or into the Irrawaddy further east. This was finally solved by modern map makers and satellite imageries.

Our 2004 exploration party traveled from Dibrugarh, crossing the Bramaputra by a two-hour ferry ride to the northern bank. Traveling via Itanagar (to obtain "Inner Line" permits), we followed the road via Ziro, Daporijo to Along. We reached Tuting in two days of further

travel, in all covering 985 km by vehicles. We then trekked to Kopu, Bona, Gelling, and Bissing, the last village on the Tsangpo. We crossed many precarious foot suspension bridges over the Tsangpo, known here as the Siang. From Bishing we climbed a peak of about 3,200m and had a wonderful view of the Namcha Barwa and Gyala Peri massifs.

From Bishing we descended to banks of the Siang and old Korbo village and soon had to climb steeply across several ridges to camp in the forest near the Kasi nala. It was an experience to cut through very thick forest with undergrowth. Two local guides led the way hacking a route through inhospitable jungles. Though we had to be most careful, the excellent clear weather allowed us to enjoy everything except the leeches, snakes, and malaria infested insects.

From this camp, we followed similar terrain, then climbed steeply to Guyor La (1,760m) on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). The pass was covered by thick forest and offered no view but it was a historic moment for we civilians to reach here. By late afternoon we descended to the Kasi nala camp. Next day we hacked a route through forest leading down steeply to the banks of the Siang. We followed the route along the Siang. A two-kilometer wide and about 150m-high rock cliff barred the way, with the Siang's water rushing at its foot, blocking passage. We climbed high along the edge of the cliff, and after covering a difficult patch with ropes, we again hacked a route through forest above to traverse and descend on the other side. Going over rocky terrain we finally reached the spot where the Tsangpo takes two "U" loops and enters India. We photographed it extensively, with a background of mountains, hills, and a river in Tibet. After retuning to the camp on the Siang, we returned along the riverbank to Bishing, crossing steep cliffs and exposed rocks. We returned via the same route back to Tuting and drove back via Along to Dibrugarh. Our expedition took place between November 16 and December 7.

We dedicated our expedition to the memory of my son, Lt. Nawang Kapadia of the 4th Battalion of the Third Gorkha Rifles, who died fighting Pakistan-based terrorists in 2000.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*