

bergschrand, and while Park returned the following spring to see if he could find the camera and film, he was unsuccessful. This ascent is the most dramatic and, despite the injuries, most acclaimed effort of all winter alpine-style first ascents made by Koreans.

LEE YOUNG-JUN, *Corean Alpine Club* (translated by Peter Jensen-Choi)

*Cholatse, northeast face, second ascent with variant.* At first believing they were opening a new route, Slovenians Tomaz Humar, Ales Kozelj, and Janko Opresnik climbed the steep and icy 1,300m northeast face of 6,440m Cholatse, more or less following the 1984 American Route to the upper part of the face (the Slovenians climbed an excellent 60m icefall right of the original line to gain the central gully system), before making a long traverse left to reach, then climb, the 1982 Swiss Route up the southeast ridge. The original and only route to ascend the entire face—a seven-day alpine-style push in November 1984 by Todd Bibler, Catherine Freer, Renny Jackson, and Sandy Stewart—remains unrepeated. The Swiss Route was climbed on the second ascent of the mountain by Nikolas Alpiger, Heidi Ludi, and Kancha Tamang, and 11 days later by Alpiger (again) and Werner Zaher.

The three Slovenians acclimatized by first climbing 6,083m Cholu Peak, then began their ascent of Cholatse on April 19. They were hit by bad weather on the second day, forcing an early bivouac in a snow cave. On the 21st they decided that, under the prevailing difficult and dangerous conditions, it would be best to escape to the crest of the southeast ridge as soon as possible. The three made a long leftward traverse below the upper funnel, reached the ridge, and a little higher bivouacked under a snow mushroom. Next afternoon they reached the summit. The technical difficulties of the Slovenian route were rated M6 6a+ and 90°.

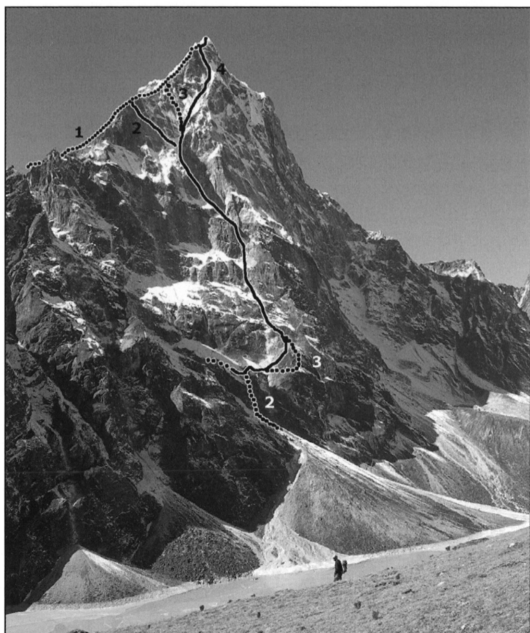
They descended the 23rd by the southeast ridge. When 300m from the bottom, Opresnik, who had been suffering from altitude, fell whilst climbing down a short section unroped, but the two others managed to grab him. If he had been only slightly out of reach, he would have gone the full length of the wall below.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*, *CLIMB Magazine*

*Cholatse, northeast face, third ascent, with variation finish.* After our ascent of Kyajo Ri described above, we trekked to the foot of Cholatse (6,440m), arriving below the northeast face on November 2. This was Seth's second visit to the mountain. His proposed route followed a mostly continuous ribbon of ice up the face. Closer inspection convinced us that we could access the ribbon despite a blank section near the bottom. [At the time the pair was unaware that this face had previously been climbed—Ed.]



Seth Hobby at grips with the main ice flow in the middle of the northeast face of Cholatse during the third ascent. John Kear



The 1,300m northeast face of Cholatse (6,440m) showing (1) Swiss Route (southeast ridge) (Alpiger-Ludi-Tamang, 1982), (2) Slovenian variant (M6 6a+ 90°, Humar-Kozelj-Opresnik, 2005), (3) Hobby-Kear variant (VI W15+ M6, 2005, starts via (2)) and (4) original American Route (VI A15 5.9 A2, Bibler-Freer-Jackson-Stewart, 1984). The rectangular snow ramp leading to the crest of the ridge right of the number 4 is the top section of the French Route on the north face. *John Kear*

ice flow 360m long. In the middle of the flow the “Dragon” bared its teeth. The first shot was a rock to Seth’s right hand, which we first thought was broken. I set off on the next lead, only to be stopped by a second barrage of stone fall. Again, one of the rocks found the Hobbit’s belay and smacked him on the head. We needed shelter fast, whether it was up or down. We chose up. Pitch after pitch of sustained grade 4 and 5 ice, combined with the rockfall, took everything we had. As darkness fell, we luckily found a safe, reasonably comfortable bivouac site, where we were able to pitch the tent, albeit in a precarious position.

On the following morning, leaving our high camp in place, we began simul-climbing several pitches of 60° and 70° alpine ice. Then the route steepened, as we hit the headwall. The Hobbit headed right up into the maw and found himself in the middle of one of the highest-quality mixed pitches either of us had ever climbed. Steep black rock led through a series of bulges into a wickedly steep corner (M6), all with positive holds and great dry-tooling. I got the consolation prize above, a steep smear of 85° to 95° ice snaking up to the summit ridge. Six full pitches of A14 led up the crest to the summit mushrooms; we arrived at the top in the dark a little after 6 p.m. It was cold, and there was no time to hang around. Sixteen rappels got us back to our high camp and our warm down bags, and the following day we rappelled the rest of the route, which we graded VI W15+ M6.

On Nov 7 we began climbing around 7 a.m. The first pitch was an amazing 60m flow of W14+. A couple of traversing pitches and easy rock led to a buttress of unique turf climbing. The first pitch on this buttress we called “Turf Wars” (M4), not knowing that it was only a warm up for the climb’s mental crux. The next pitch, dubbed “Tuff Reliance,” was a bit of a third eye opener at M6 R/X. These pitches were the key to the climb and led us into the icy meat of the route. We continued for another 400m of excellent terrain, which included a couple of very cool and often thin pitches up to W15+ M5, then after some 780m of climbing, at an altitude of 5,300m, we found a decent bivouac site.

Next morning, after an easy scramble up to a cave, the Hobbit (Seth) led a slightly overhanging cool whip, thinly plastered in a granite corner. Dubious protection insured that the Hobbit would send. A few hundred meters of easy ice and crunchy névé led to the heart of the route: a silvery blue