



The north side of the Kwangde group after heavy snowfall. On the left is Kwangde Shar (6,093m) with the 1978 northeast spur separating sunlight and shadow. This received an alpine style winter ascent last December. To the right and in shadow lies the steep Hungo Face of Kwangde Lho (6,187m), home to the recent French route. Right again and catching the morning sun is Kwangde Nup (6,035m). *The Jules Cartwright Trust*

ferring it to our three water bottles. The route seemed to become more complex the higher we climbed. By 6 p.m. we had reached 5,800m and decided to bivouac, spending three hours excavating a comfortable site for the cold night ahead, spreading the rope out in place of the mats we had decided not to bring. The wind was stronger here, and blew snow into our sleeping bags. My body was stiff, food was limited and we had only taken one gas cylinder.

Next day, each 50m pitch took more than one hour to climb and the occasional ancient fixed rope just confused my route finding. Eventually, we came to a spot on the ridge where the way ahead seemed impossible. I climbed around to the right for five meters and spotted a rusty piton five meters higher in an irregular crack. I didn't have the right gear to go up in that direction but shouted to Seok-hee to watch the tope as I crept my way up the slab. It was a bit frightening at first and I suspected that previous parties had also climbed through this section somewhat hesitantly.

Engrossed in the climbing, my stiff body began to loosen and after a thin vertical crack, I reached the narrow summit. We took a few pictures and then I wrapped a two and a half meter sling round a large rock bollard and started to rappel the south face.

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MAHALANGUR HIMAL—KHUMBU SECTION

Palung Ri, permit confusion. A funny thing happened in connection with the first permit to be issued by the Nepalese Ministry of Tourism for Palung Ri. Two unsuspecting New Zealanders, Michael Chapman-Smith and Tim Logan, selected this mountain because they mistakenly

believed it was unclimbed, and at 7,012m was just the right sort of altitude. Imagine their surprise when on the final approach to the mountain, they found a national boundary pillar and beyond it saw numerous tents comprising Cho Oyu base camp in Tibet.

Instead, they returned and climbed a 6,000er called Cho Rapsek that was definitely inside Nepal. They came back to Kathmandu to declare, as Chapman-Smith put it, that it was “morally unacceptable” for the Nepalese government to grant a permit for a mountain that wasn’t theirs.

In the initial list of 103 new peaks announced by the Nepalese Government in 2002, number 49, erroneously included but subsequently never removed, was Palung Ri (7,012m), a relatively easy snow peak that lies immediately north of Cho Oyu, well into Tibet. Apparently, various people pointed out this mistake to government officials at the time, but no corrective action was ever taken. The first recorded ascent of Palung Ri took place in 1995, when the Slovenian couple, Andrej and Marija Stremfelj, reached the top via the south ridge as part of their acclimatization for an ascent of Cho Oyu. It has been climbed several times since [including autumn 2006, see the Tibet section of Climbs and Expeditions].

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Pasang Lhamu Chuli, south ridge attempt and tragedy. South Tyrolean mountaineers, Alois “Luis” Brugger and Hans Kammerlander returned to 7,351m Pasang Lhamu Chuli, still intent, it seems, to make the “first ascent” of this peak formerly known as Jasamba, southwest of Cho Oyu on the Nepal-Tibet frontier. Renamed in 1993 after the first Nepalese woman to climb Everest (and who died on the descent), rumors abound of the peak being climbed in the past by one or two climbers acclimatizing for fast alpine style ascents of lines on the southwest face of Cho Oyu. However the first official ascent occurred in 1986 when a Japanese expedition climbed the northwest ridge from Tibet. This ridge was gained from the Nepalese side in 1996 by both Japanese and French expeditions to make the second and third ascents. The fourth was made by Slovenians, Rok Blagus, Samo Krmelj, and Uros Samec in autumn 2004. These three climbed the southeast flank to gain the crest of the south ridge at ca 6,650m and continued to the summit (1,550m, ED, M5,): see *AAJ* 2005, pp. 391-392. Brugger, Kammerlander, and Karl Unterkircher attempted the south ridge in spring 2005. They retreated at around 6,700m (*AAJ* 2006, pp. 415-416).

In 2006 and working from a camp at 5,950m, Brugger and Kammerlander fixed ropes up the spur, as they had done before, and on May 11 pressed on up the snow fields above the steepest section to a height of just over 7,000m. Here, they decided to descend to base camp for a rest before going for the summit. Brugger went first. At 6,800m Kammerlander reached a point where he looked down and could see no sign of his partner and, impressed by the latter’s apparent speed, thought he must already be well down the mountain on his way to camp. However, he then realized that the only tracks in front were coming up the mountain. Casting around, he noticed a karabiner and quick draw attached to the rope. It appears that either an equipment failure or lack of concentration on the part of Brugger had resulted in the latter became detached from the fixed rope and falling to his death. Subsequent searches, including the use of a helicopter, failed to locate the body.

Brugger (47) was a very experienced Alpine guide and snowboard instructor who climbed hard routes throughout the Dolomites and Alps in the 1980s. In 1986 he made a rapid second ascent of the West Face of Ama Dablam. On Kammerlander’s return to Kathmandu,