

the Japanese route in its upper reaches. This was repeated in spring 1985 by Hungarians (the first Hungarian ascent of any major Nepalese mountain), while in autumn of that year Japanese appear to have repeated, more or less, the 1978 route. Yet more Japanese appear to have repeated the 1978 route in the autumn of 1986, the last time the mountain was climbed from the south.

Himalchuli West has been climbed twice since 1978: in 1989 by a multi-national, commercially organized expedition via the southwest ridge, which they found long and hard and on which they fixed 3,500m of rope, and on December 19, 1990, again by the southwest ridge, by Koreans who were making a winter attempt on the main peak. Lidanda Peak (6,693m) was first climbed in 1970 via a Dutch team via the south ridge, a route that was repeated again by two members of the 1978 British Himalchuli expedition.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*, www.climbmagazine.com

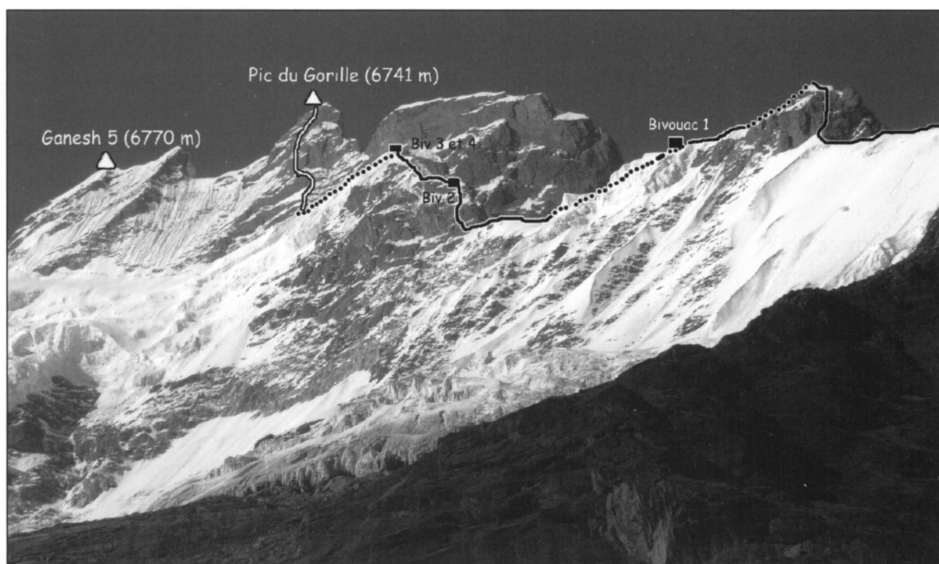
GANESH HIMAL

Punchen Himal North, first ascent. After the expedition to Dolpo, reported elsewhere, Tamotsu Ohnishi's Osaka Alpine Club expedition returned to Kathmandu, and some members flew home. The remaining six left for a trek up the Buri Gandaki on October 7. Before Nyuk (Ngyak) they turned right and headed up the Shyar (or Shar) Khola valley, which runs north-east, behind and north of the Ganesh Himal. On the 18th they set up base camp at 4,124m, just north of the Shyar Khola. The following day Irisawa, Kato, Mizutani, Ohnishi, and Chhepa Sherpa placed a high camp at 4,850m (N 28°40'21", E 85°06'96") at the start of the northeast ridge of their chosen objective, the unclimbed Punchen Himal (6,049m, N 28°39'40", E 85°08'48"). This previously unattempted peak lies on the Tibetan border north of 6,247m Pashuwo.

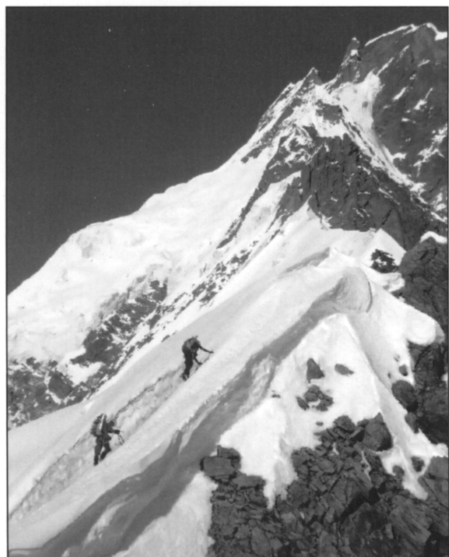
On the 20th all started climbing up the ridge at 5 a.m. The ridge was mainly rock, with occasional icy sections, to 5,700m, where they moved onto the northwest face and fixed 250m of rope, reaching the crest of the northwest ridge at 5,900m. Above, a 60° slope, then breakable crust over deep soft snow that they however climbed without ropes in an hour, led to the north summit at 5,962m. It was only 11:30 a.m., but the way to the main summit led along a knife-edge ridge. There wasn't enough rope for all members to continue, so Ohnishi and others went down. After three hours on the saw-tooth ridge, the remaining members had gained no altitude above the north summit and were still half a kilometer from the main summit. Although not technically difficult, the route had been a tiring succession of loose rock and unconsolidated snow, and the team decided to retreat. On the way down they took a more direct route from 5,700m, rappelling straight down the face to a small lake above high camp. On the 21st they returned to base camp and left for a trek over the Larkya La and around the northwest side of Manaslu to inspect other peaks they hope to attempt in the future. They returned to Kathmandu in November.

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Gorilla Peak, Ganesh, first ascent. Ganesh V (6,770m) lies at the eastern end of the Ganesh Himal, visible from Kathmandu. The northern flanks, technically in Tibet, were climbed by a large Japanese expedition in 1980, while later the south face was climbed by a Slovenian team



Ganesh V from the southeast showing the route followed by the French team along the east ridge to make the first ascent of Gorilla Peak. Bivouac 1 is at 6,200m. *Aymeric Clouet*



En route to the first bivouac on the east ridge of Ganesh V (6,770m). The main summit is the most distant snow-capped top, while Gorilla Peak (6,741m GPS), reached by the French team, is the second pointed rocky pinnacle to the right. *Aymeric Clouet*

[Editor's note: In 1980, 12 members of Yoshio Nagao's expedition summited via the north face and northwest ridge. In 1987 Haruo Makino's Japanese expedition put four members on the summit via the south ridge, a route that was more or less repeated in 1994 by a Slovenian expedition, after the latter had given up the idea of a new route on the southwest face. Four Frenchmen, who had a permit for Paldor, attempted the south face and northwest ridge in 2006 but were killed, probably in an avalanche from high on the peak. Aymeric Clouet was one of the party who later that season went to search for the bodies.] Before 2007 these were the only routes on the mountain. Our recent climb established a new route to a subsidiary summit.

At 4 p.m. on November 15, Frederic Degoulet, Julien Dusserre, Mathieu Maynadier, and I reached the top of the third point (6,741m by GPS) of Ganesh V, having climbed the east ridge. We named the virgin aiguille

Gorilla Peak, because we could see the face of a gorilla in the summit rocks when looking from the east. Our route from base camp was 6.5 km long, with a vertical interval of 2,700m (1,240m

of technical ridge climbing). Difficulties encountered included 3-4km of cornices, 75° snow, mixed climbing to M5 and rock to 6a.

After a 15-day acclimatization trek along the paths of Gosainkund Lake (the sacred lakes of Shiva), we met our team of 10 porters and cooks in the village of Tatopani. Buildings were grouped around thermal hot springs, and the place is a pilgrimage destination. It was the last village we would see for 23 days. Our acclimatization was uneventful, other than our change in diet to Dal Bhat, a traditional Nepalese dish that caused intestinal problems. Following a pattern of three days at altitude, then three days rest, we established our advanced base camp at 5,500m, sheltered by a small cliff. Our first bivouac was at 6,200m, where we left a cache of bivouac equipment, food, and gear. After one final rest at base camp we decided to “put to sea” and try for the summit. The expression is fitting, as a marvelous sea of clouds accompanied us, as though we were sailing on an ocean of cotton. However, these clouds eventually began to transform into wet cumulus, dropping snowflakes in the afternoon. The change in weather forced us to adapt, as the climbing became more mixed and was swept by small snow slides. Sometimes we had to stop for a few hours to wait for a clearing, in order to get oriented. On the evening of the fourth day, when we bivouacked at ca 6,500m, we were informed that 100 km/hour winds were forecast for the following day till evening. The temperature was already low, each night dropping to -20 or -25°C, and we realized a further drop would prove unbearable.

Knowing that we would not have a second chance, we set our hearts on the most easterly of the three summits of Ganesh V. This was the rockiest and in our opinion the most beautiful. On the fifth day we climbed 250m of granite (mixed and 6a) to the top, about 30m lower than the main summit. The forecast allowed enough time for a quick descent, and the immense joy of successfully reaching the top made us forget, during the bivouac that followed, the cold and the fear of being ripped off the wall by the wind. It was late on the sixth night that we reached base camp, where we were greeted warmly by Kamal and Rai, our cooks, who were happy to join in our celebrations.

AYMERIC CLOUET, *France*

JUGAL HIMAL

Gurkarmo Ri, first known ascent. Paulo Grobel organized two commercial expeditions for Nepal's post-monsoon season. On October 2 Grobel, two Sherpa companions, and five French clients reached the summit of Saribung (6,328m) in the Damodar Himal. This, the fourth ascent of the mountain, more or less followed the original route up the northeast face and northeast ridge, pioneered in 2003 by Jim Frush and Steve Furman. The leader then returned to Kathmandu to collect a new group, for a more demanding ascent of Langtang Ri (7,205m) in the Langtang Himal, a peak which has been attempted at least seven times, four times successfully.

Grobel established his base camp, near the foot of the Langtang Glacier, at a spot known as Pemthang Karpo. [Also referred to as Morimoto Peak Base Camp—6,150m Morimoto Peak, officially named Bhemdang Ri, lies to the northwest—the site is immediately below and north of 6,412m Langshisha Ri—Ed.]. A quick probe north convinced the French team that with all the fresh snow on the moraine-covered glacier, just reaching the foot of the mountain would take too long and would be particularly difficult for their porters. It was time for a rethink.

The weather forecast, which predicted clear skies but winds up to 60km/hour at 6,500m,