

second night but continued downclimbing to arrive at base camp, totally exhausted, between 2:00 and 3:00 the following morning. For a complete account see Sergey Kofanov's article, "The Magic Pillar," earlier in the *Journal*.

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

JANAK HIMAL

Ghhanyala Hies, attempt. A five-member ski expedition, which comprised Yan Andre (leader), Stephane Dan and Pierre Alexis de Postestad (French) and Thor Husted and Nathan Wallace (Americans), was the first officially to attempt Ghhanyala Hies (6,744m). This is a remote peak, on the Tibetan border northwest of Janak, that was brought onto the permitted list in 2002. It is believed this was only the second group planning to attempt the mountain, the first being two Americans who failed to reach it around 10 years previously.

The five made the normal Kangchenjunga north-side trek as far as Lhonak, arriving on October 10th. From there they branched left to reach the Lhonak Glacier, where on the 13th they established base camp at ca 4,980m. Over the next few days they followed the main Chijima (Tsisima) Glacier northeast to 5,500m, where on the 17th they established a higher camp. On the 21st they left this camp and climbed Chijima II (Tsisima II, 6,170m) via the northwest face [Editor's note: This is the most northerly of the three Chijima peaks, the highest, on the far side of a 6,000m col to the southwest being 6,196m and the lowest, a little southeast of the highest, being 6,126m. The American-French team most likely followed the west branch of the Chijima Glacier and climbed northeast-facing slopes to the upper northwest ridge/face]. De Postestad turned back at 5,900m, but the remaining four continued to the summit and then skied back down (45-50°, excellent powder).

On the 23rd all members left the 5,500m camp and continued northeast up the main Chijima Glacier to its head at 5,850m, where de Postestad and Mingma Tamang waited, while the others skinned across the horizontal glacier to the base of Ghhanyala Hies. All four climbed a 50-55° icy couloir to 6,150m, where the face above rose directly to the west-southwest ridge. Here they moved left but found more icy conditions. Their aim had been to ski down the mountain, but now they decided the slopes were too icy and the way ahead looked too difficult to climb up and down with their heavy packs, which included skis. They descended.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *AAC Honorary Member, Nepal and*
RICHARD SALISBURY, *The Himalayan Database*

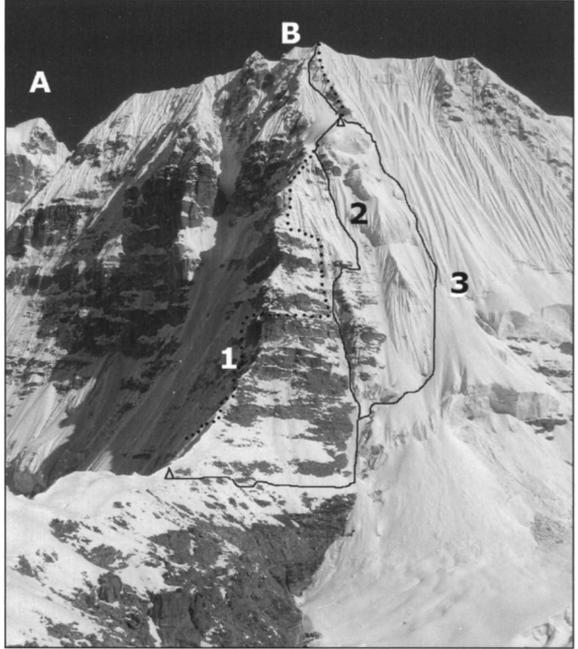
JONGSANG HIMAL

Drohmo south pillar, major variation; Drohmo East, first ascent; Pathibhara Chuli, southwest face; Kirat Chuli west face and Chang Himal north face, attempts. The Slovenian Alpine Association organized an expedition to the Kangchenjunga region, situated in the remote northeastern part of Nepal. Leadership was given to veteran expedition leader Tone Skarja, a man with much Himalayan experience. The team also comprised alpinists Tine Cuder, Matej Kladnik, Ales Kozelj, Boris Lorencic, Mitja Sorn, and I, accompanying by expedition doctor Damijan Mesko.

The main objective was an ascent of Kangbachen, at 7,902m the fifth highest summit in

the Kangchenjunga Massif. However, the moraine of the Ramtang Glacier was so shattered that it was not possible for porters to reach the proposed base camp. Instead, we established base camp farther north at Pangpema (4,940m) and attempted nearby peaks.

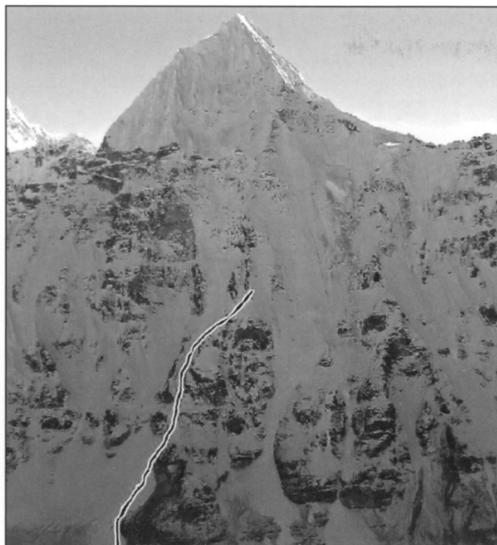
To acclimatize for attempts on the difficult north face of Chang Himal (Wedge Peak or Ramtang Chang, 6,802m) and an ascent of Kirat Chuli (Tent Peak, 7,362m), Kozelj and Sorn made an ascent of the south pillar of Drohmo's central summit. They found good snow conditions and climbed largely to the right of the crest of the pillar, joining the 1998 route, climbed by Roger Mear and Doug Scott, in only a few places. They took two days from the 6,000m col at the foot of the pillar, reaching the small summit at the top of the crest on October 16. [Editor's note: Mear and Scott continued a short distance west along the summit ridge to reach a possibly higher corniced top, which they registered as 6,855m. The main summit of Drohmo is 6,881m and situated a considerable distance to the west. It remains unclimbed.] From the col the 800m-high route averaged around 60°, with steeper sections up to 80°. Due to good snow conditions, the two were able to descend a largely independent route, completely on snow, to the east of their line of ascent. They then tried the north face of Chang Himal, but were forced to bail after one bivouac, at a point less than half way up the face, because of terrible conditions: considerable amounts of soft snow over rock. An attempt on the unclimbed west face of Kirat Chuli was abandoned at the bottom, when they found it to be deep in snow and avalanche prone. [This face had been climbed to 6,700m, seemingly above all technical difficulties, in 2002, by another Slovenian team—Ed.]



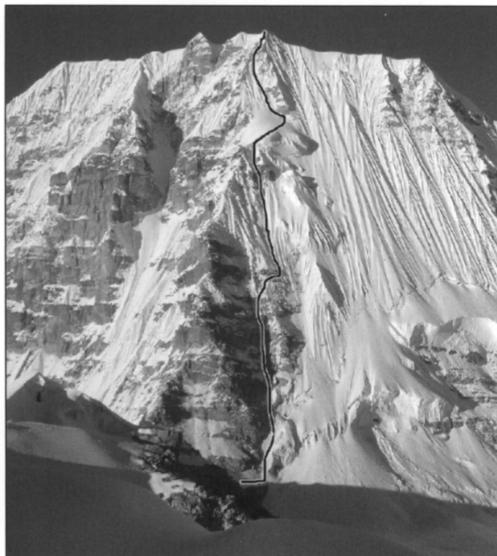
Part of the Drohmo massif seen from the south. (A) Drohmo (6,881m). (B) Drohmo Central (6,855m). (1) Original route up central spur of south face (Mear-Scott, 1998). A steep slope of snow and rock leads up from the glacier to the left in about five pitches to reach the ca 6,000m col at the foot of the spur. (2) Slovenian route (Kozelj-Sorn, 2007). (3) Descent used by Kozelj and Sorn. *Mitja Sorn*



Starting a leftward traverse through snow-covered rock slabs high on the first ascent of Srdljiva sled (Stinking trail), South Face of Drohmo East. *Tine Cuder*



The north face of Chang Himal (a.k.a. Wedge Peak or Ramtang Chang, 6,802m) seen from Drohmo. Marked (with bivouac site) is the attempt by Slovenians Ales Kozelj and Mitja Sorn, who were defeated by terrible snow conditions. This peak has only been climbed once: an unauthorized ascent in 1974 from the Ramtang Glacier to the south by three Slovenians. *Mitja Sorn*

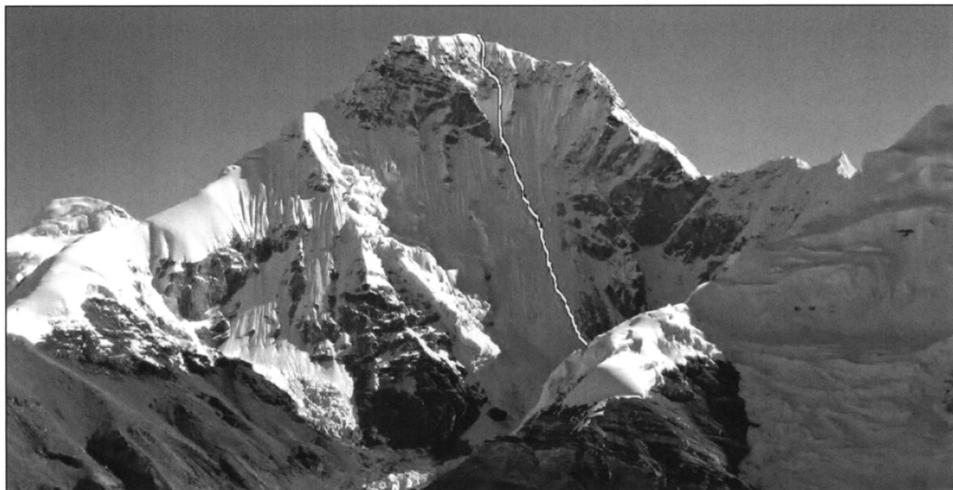


The south face of the Central (6,855m) and East (ca 6,695m) summits of Drohmo, showing the two 2007 routes. On the left the Kozelj-Sorn route on the central spur and on the right the Cuder-Kladnik-Kozelj route, Smrdljiva Sled (Stinking trail). *Miha Valic*

Cuder, Kladnik, and Kozelj then made another ascent of the south face of Drohmo (Sorn staying at base camp with a toothache), this time to the previously unclimbed east summit (ca 6,695m). After a bivouac at the foot of the face, the three climbed their new route in eight hours, largely on snow and ice, reaching the summit ridge just left of the highest point. Again, they found good conditions and were able to summit and descend to base camp the same day, October 25th. They called the 900m route Smrdljiva Sled (Stinking Trail) and rated the difficulties TD+, VI/4+, M4.

Lorencic and Valic acclimatized with an ascent of Pangpema Peak (6,068m) and then climbed Pk. 6,630m on the southeast ridge of Pathibhara Chuli (Pyramid Peak, 7,140m). The route followed snow slopes up to 45° on the southwest ridge, the summit being reached on the 16th [most likely the first ascent of this summit—Ed.]. They returned to base camp after three days, well acclimatized. However, they were unable to examine the southwest face of Pathibhara Chuli, their next objective, because it was obscured by cloud each afternoon.

After they rested a few days, the weather stabilized, and they set out for the remote basin beneath the virgin southwest face of Pathibhara Chuli. The next day they climbed to the glacier plateau below the wall and examined their proposed route, spending the night at 5,900m. The day after they climbed 50–60° snow slopes to a narrow shelf below a rock band, where they spent the night at 6,900m. The following morning, the 24th, they climbed through the rock band (UIAA IV, 20m) and reached the summit. This was the first ascent of the mountain from Nepal and only the second overall ascent. [Pathibhara Chuli was first climbed in the spring of



Pathibhara Chuli (7,140m) on the Nepal-Sikkim border. Marked is the Lorencic-Valic route on the southwest face, which was followed to make the first ascent of the mountain from Nepal. The right skyline is the unclimbed southeast ridge. On the far right of the picture are the convoluted ice slopes of Pt. 6,630m, a subsidiary summit climbed for the first time by the Slovenian pair prior to their ascent of Pathibhara Chuli. The left skyline is the west ridge, attempted in 1996 and '98 by Australian and New Zealand teams. In the left distance is Langpo (6,965m), first climbed by Alexander Kellas in 1909. *Miha Valic*

1993 from Sikkim by an Indo-Japanese expedition via the northeast ridge, over the Sphinx. The 7,090m northeast summit has been reached twice from Nepal: in 1949 by Swiss and in 2006 by Slovenians—Ed.] They descended the same route, reaching base camp in a round trip of five days. The team found walking on the convoluted shattered glaciers of the area very strenuous, but the weather and climbing conditions were good.

MIHA VALIC, *Slovenia*

No fatalities post monsoon. In the autumn of 1967, when only two expeditions attempted Nepalese Himalayan peaks over 6,600m, there were no climbers' deaths. Every autumn since then there have been deaths—until 2007, when none of the 183 teams suffered fatalities. Why none now, after 40 years of fatal falls, pulmonary edema and other kinds of illness, and climbers freezing to death at high altitudes? Certainly there has been increased understanding of the causes of high-altitude sickness and what to do about it, and this knowledge is more widely shared. Clothing, sleeping bags, tents, ropes, and other gear have improved and become more widely available, notably in Eastern Europe. But do these factors fully account for the difference? The weather has gotten no kinder. Has it been all of the above, plus climbers' better judgment and better weather forecasts on which to base their judgment—plus sheer good luck? Whatever the reasons, it's a nice surprise.

ELIZABETH HAWLEY, *AAC Honorary Member, Nepal*