



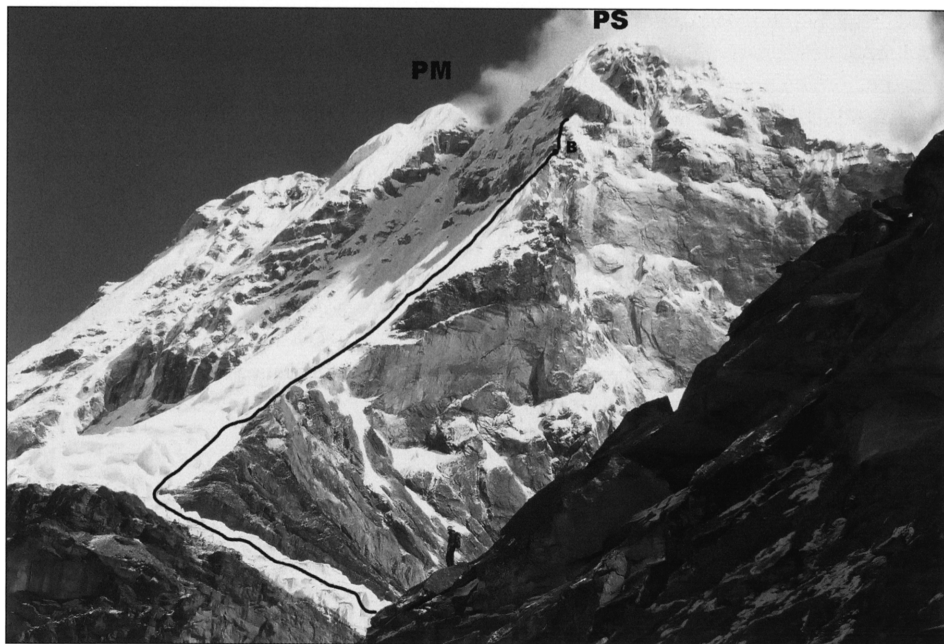
Kyashar (Peak 43, 6,770m) from the Hinku Valley to the southwest. (1) West ridge (Broderik-Frank-Normand, 2003; the team moved left at ca 6,400m and reached the summit via the west face). (2) Doudlebsky-Holecek descent after climbing southwest face. (3) Southwest face–Ramro Chaina (Doudlebsky-Holecek, 2005; the climbers stopped on joining the west ridge). (4) South Pillar attempt (Doudlebsky-Holecek, 2008) with bivouac site (B) marked. *Marek Holecek*

point we had overcome difficulties of WI6 and M7. The following day Jan's tendons were inflamed, dictating another retreat. We rappelled 800m to the tent and closed the year's exploration of Asian mountains.

MAREK HOLECEK, *Czech Republic*

*Peak 41, south summit (6,575m), west spur, attempt.* On September 30 Andy Houseman and I flew to Lukla. Four days later we established base camp in a hidden valley below Peak 41 (6,648m), 45 minutes walk from the small village of Khare in the Hinku Valley. Our goal was a probable first ascent of the south summit of Peak 41, which we planned to reach by a steep couloir leading to the delicate, corniced south ridge. On the 9th we walked down to Tagnag Village (4,350m) for a rest before starting the climb. Returning on the 11th we found our tents, food, and equipment had been stolen—a £10,000 loss. We returned to Kathmandu, and Andy left for Britain two days later.

After much e-mailing, a second chance presented itself in the shape of Dave Noddings, a sales rep with DMM in North Wales, who brought a load of shiny new gear. Noddy had little Scottish winter experience, but e-mailed saying he needed a holiday and fancied trying some of the bigger stuff. However, the altitude did not agree with Noddy, so I continued alone, waving an emotional farewell. The couloir and ridge held too many imponderables for a solo climber, so I chose the right hand rib of the west face, which leads directly to the south summit.



Peak 41 from the southwest. (PM) is the Main summit (6,648m) and (PS) the South summit (6,575m). Marked are Nick Bullock's solo attempt on the west spur and bivouac just below his high point. *Nick Bullock*

After a technical approach I made an irreversible rappel onto the glacier. The ropes loosened a rock, which hit my leg above the knee. What did I have to do to get some climbing done? I bivouacked at the bottom of the face at 5,300m, dosed on Brufen bombs.

At 1 a.m. I limped across the glacier and climbed steep water ice beneath worrying seracs. Runnels of fluted snow followed until 6 a.m., when the cold got to me—my preferred clothes having been stolen. I cut a ledge and got into my sleeping bag for an hour, to warm up. Farther up, loose, steep rock, rippy ice, and soft snow made things insecure. Exposure stung my cheeks and hurt my head. An impasse forced a rappel into a runnel on the left. Then, 5m from an obvious snow ledge, I had to leave my sack and back rope for a section of snow climbing so insecure I thought I was going to fall. I reached a perfect bivouac site at 6,100m. Although it was only 1:25 p.m., difficult climbing ahead and my knackered state convinced me to settle in for a long rest.

Day two brought the same as day one. A runnel of unsupportive snow led to the foot of a large rock buttress 200–300m from the summit. There was no obvious weakness, and as I had left my second rope and bivouac gear at the site below, hoping to reach the summit that day, it looked all the more impassable. I cut a snow bollard into the sugar and descended. At 6 p.m., after a scary descent, I reached my first bivouac site, at the bottom of the face, lay down on a boulder, and slept for the first time in three nights.

On reflection the climbing was some of the hardest I have done in the Himalaya, with or without a partner, and definitely the most insecure I've ever soloed. I thank the MEF, BMC, DMM, and Mammut for their continued support.

NICK BULLOCK, U.K.