

cantly greater commitment given the irreversible rappels and more time spent directly exposed to alarmingly unstable seracs. In years to come, if the seracs were to stabilize, a direct ascent of the rock wall and a route through the seracs would provide a more satisfying line, probably at D+. However, given the current risk of ice avalanche, I assess the 1,200m route at TD+/ED1.

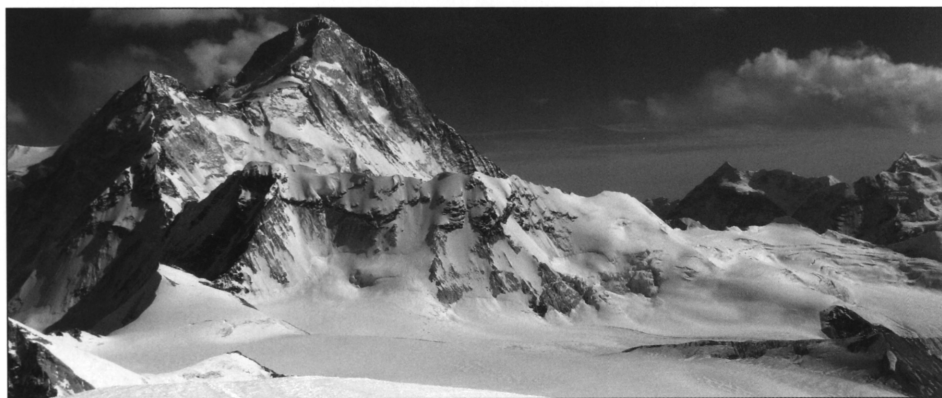
JOE SIMPSON, *U.K.*

## MAHALANGUR HIMAL — MAKALU SECTION

*Pethangtse (6,739m), south face to southwest ridge.* The summits of Everest and Makalu are 20km apart. Halfway between is Pethangtse, on the border of Nepal and Tibet. On October 30 Stephen Graham, Colin McLean, and I, with climbing Sherpas Dawa Gyalzen and Pema Tsering, were the first to reach the summit since the peak was officially opened for climbing in 2002. Our GPS read 6,770m on top. Ours may be the first ascent for 25 years. [Pethangtse was first climbed in May 1954 by Michael Ball, Norman Hardie, Brian Wilkins, and Urkien Sherpa from Edmund Hillary's Makalu reconnaissance expedition. After various ascents in the 1950s and 60s, a Spanish climber, Nil Bohigas, soloed the south face and descended the southwest



Looking west-northwest from summit of Pethangtse across Kangshung faces of Shartse II (7,457m), Shartse (Peak 38 or Shanti Shikar, 7,591m), Lhotse Shar (8,382m), Lhotse Middle (8,410m), Lhotse (8,516m), and Everest (8,850m). *David Graham*



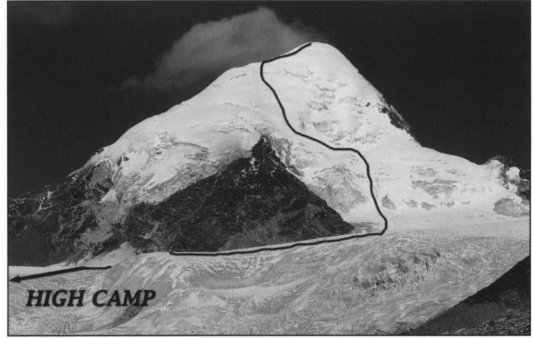
Looking southeast along Tibet-Nepal border from Pethangtse, first toward Chago (6,893m), then Kangchungtse (Makalu II, 7,678m) and finally Makalu (8,485m). In far distant right is Tutse (6,758m) and to the right again Peak 4 (6,720m). *David Graham*

ridge in 1984. Since that time there are no known ascents, though it is possible that members from expeditions with Makalu permits also climbed it].

We made our base camp at Makalu upper base camp (5,300m). Above, it was exploratory for all of us, as our Sherpas had never been so far up the Barun Glacier. We followed the canyon of the Barun to a sprawling glaciated plateau, and after two days placed a high camp at 5,880m. The situation felt remote. From the start of our approach march in the foothills it

had taken 17 days until we first caught sight of Pethangtse. From high camp we headed across the moderately crevassed upper Barun Glacier to the foot of Pethangtse's south face, at 6,000m. We climbed the face on 40–55° snow, avoiding obvious crevasses. A massive bergshroud 150m below the summit caused a pause for reflection before we worked left, mounted the rolling southwest ridge, and followed it to the top. The grade was AD-

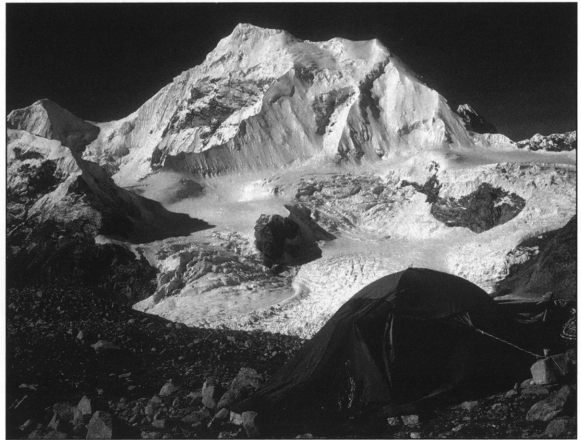
The proximity of Chomolongo, Makalu, Shartse, Lhotse Shar, the mountains of Tibet, and the Kangshung Face of Everest provided one of the world's great mountain vistas. It was Pethangtse's spectacular location, lost by the passage of time, which drew us to this utterly amazing place. For more information and photographs, including a summit panorama, visit [www.pethangtse.wordpress.com](http://www.pethangtse.wordpress.com)



Pethangtse from south showing route of Canadian ascent. David Graham

DAVID GRAHAM, *Canada*

*Baruntse (7,219m), northeast face, attempt.* If you're headed to Baruntse to seek a plumb line on a cleaved face, it'll be techy, heady, whatever you want. If you want off, it'll be scary. If you want in, it'll cost you about \$6,000. If you want the top, be prepared for a few goes. That's what I think. When I met Elizabeth Hawley at the Nirvana Garden Hotel back in Kathmandu, she sat on my left, a man whose life I saved sat on my right, and Josh Butson was across from me. This was our first morning in the Nepalese capital after an exhilarating 10-day alpine-style attempt on a new line. We dis-



Baruntse from upper Barun Glacier to northeast. Main summit on left, north summit on right. Left skyline is normal route. Snowy east ridge in center descends to col, in front of which stands Peak 6,220m. To right, above glacier shelf, central rib of northeast face leads toward north summit. Lindsay Griffin