

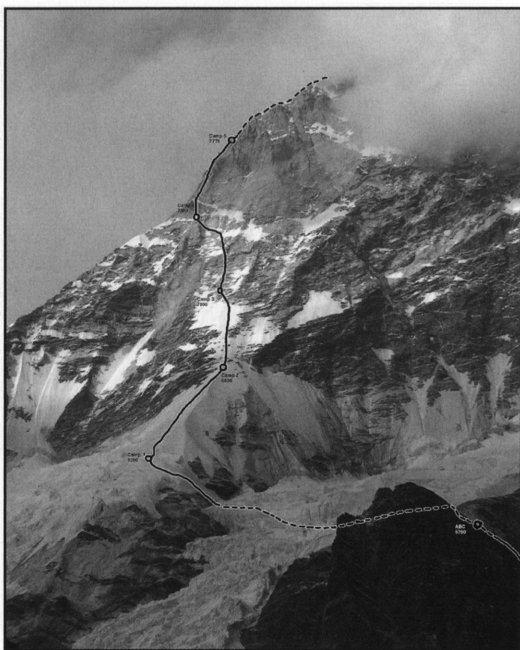
On May 1, having reached 7,600m on the crest of the pillar, the climbers were forced down by high winds (up to 140 km/hour), which confined everyone to base camp for 11 days. When they eventually managed to get back onto the face, they were forced to re-establish most of the high camps. One tent was blown out at advanced base; Camp 1 was partially destroyed; Camp 3 was partially destroyed; and Camp 4 completely destroyed.

On May 17 Camp 5 was established above the pillar crux at 7,750m, after which three teams made summit attempts. Only one got a suitable weather window. Sergey Bublik, Vladimir Roshko, and Dmitry Venslavovsky reached the top on May 23, after a total of 3,000m of rope had been fixed from 6,000–7,800m.

Arriving on the summit in the dark, not wanting to reverse their route, and finding that climbers from other expeditions had reached the top via the Normal Route from the north, the three Ukrainians chose to follow tracks down toward the

Makalu La, reaching at tent at 7,700m with a lot of assistance from Marty Schmidt from New Zealand. Schmidt was alone and had placed the tent for a night's rest prior to a summit bid the following day. He had to climb through the night to 8,100m to assist the third and final Ukrainian down to his tent but was then able to turn around, climb back up, and reach the top by 3 p.m. on the 24th.

The French (west) pillar has still received few ascents. On the last, in 2004, American Jay Sieger and Ukrainian Vladimir Terzyul reached the summit but were killed on the descent. Sieger's body was discovered at 8,300m by two Kazakhs on the same expedition, but Terzyul, who had climbed 13 of the 8,000m peaks, some by new routes, was never found. During their summit push Bublik, Roshko, and Venslavovsky found equipment belonging to Terzyul at Camp 5 and passed Sieger's body on their way to the top.

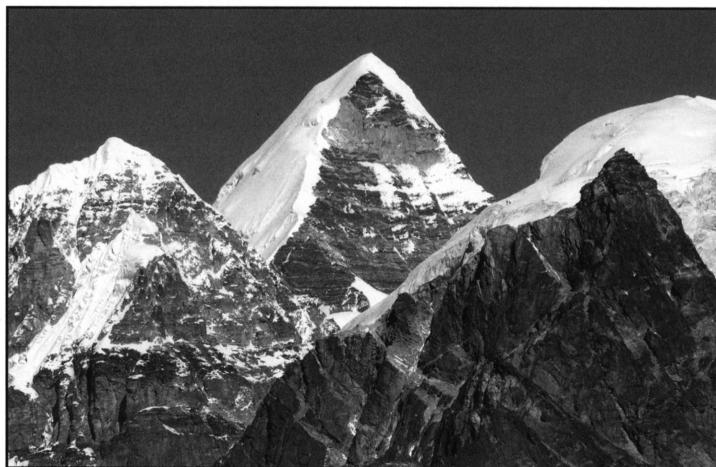


The new Ukrainian Route on the southwest face of Makalu. The left skyline is the French (West) Ridge. Camps marked are ABC (5,700m), Camp 1 (6,200m), Camp 2 (6,600m), Camp 3 (7,000m), Camp 4 (7,500m), and Camp 5 (7,770m). Supplied by Anna Piunova, [mountain.ru](http://mountain.ru)

ANNA PIUNOVA, [mountain.ru](http://mountain.ru)

## OMI KANGRI HIMAL

*Pabuk Kang (a.k.a. Yangma, 6,244m) southwest ridge.* Far East Nepal is best known for being crowned by the Kanchenjunga massif. Between there and Makalu the Himalayan crest makes an uncommon drop in altitude. Perhaps that is why climbers have not given peaks west of the Ghunsa Valley much attention. However, there are plenty of interesting summits between 5,500m and 6,500m.



Pabuk Kang seen from the Marson La, a distance of almost 20km to the south. The first ascent followed the snow ridge immediately left of the rocky face. *Tim Macartney-Snape*

In 2003, while trekking in the Yangma valley, I saw a number of peaks worthy of a small expedition and vowed to return. In October, accompanied by some of the members from my first foray to the Himalaya (Dunagiri in 1978), I got a permit to climb a peak near the head of the Pabuk Valley, which lies above the Bhotia village of Yangma. This village

is remarkable in that it lies on a sunlit south-facing slope at 4,200m and is one of the, if not the, highest permanently settled village in Nepal. Yangma people trade over the 5,746m Ghan La at the head of the valley. They are closer to a Tibetan roadhead than one in Nepal by at least one week's walk.

It was a late monsoon, so rather than fly, Ken Baldwin, Dave Barton, Colin Cameron, John Finnegan, Theo Hooy, Stacy Rodger, Keith Scott, and I took a bus from the Terai up to the roadhead town of Taplejung, a journey none of us cares ever to repeat. We reached our base camp after eight days of walking. It took a couple of days' exploration to decide which was our peak—the locals had no idea. We opted for the most prominent peak at the head of the valley and found a friendly south-facing base camp site, with bountiful clear water and unknown access to our favored route on the peak, the southwest ridge.

It was heartening to see that these valleys still held healthy-looking herds of blue sheep, frequent sightings of which gave us the vain hope that we might spy a snow leopard. Our lack of stealth meant all we saw were tracks in the snow. Luckily, access to our preferred route proved both interesting and relatively straightforward. After meandering across, down, and then up the sides of old ablation valleys, we followed the bed of a long-retreated glacier on clean, high-friction slabs, which were just low angled enough to allow walking to a safe but spectacularly situated site for advance base. This provided a good view of our objective. From here we climbed onto a glacier and up to a short rock step, on which we fixed a rope before retreating to base camp in the face of an upcoming storm. This produced a foot of snow: the only significant fall of the trip.

When the weather cleared, we returned to see if we could make the climb. We established camp under a short headwall leading to a low point on our chosen ridge. On November 5 we left this camp at 4 a.m. The going was fast on firm snow, and by daylight we found ourselves faced with a choice of climbing a rocky tower that looked like a stack of shattered blocks, or making a traverse around the obstacle. I opted for the traverse and was treated to spicy climbing on overlapping iced-up slabs. Unfortunately my ropemate Dave and I had the best of it, as Ken, Keith, Theo, and Colin, who followed, found the going more precarious due to decreased ice. They were slowed to the point where they only made it a short distance past the start of the ridge

proper before wisely deciding to call off a summit bid.

Back on the ridge we found conditions to be perfect, but as this was Dave's first time at altitude, we thought it prudent to remain roped, so we simul-climbed, placing the odd snow picket very firmly. We were blessed with a crystal-clear autumn day. There was hardly a murmur of a breeze, and the vista in all directions presented peak after peak in fine detail, particularly to the west, where we could see Everest's Kangshung face, the east face of Lhotse, Chomo Lonzo, and Makalu.

By 1:30 p.m. we stood as close to the corniced summit as we dared. To our north a broad brown valley dropped to a shimmering plain, and beyond it rose a group of peaks dangling stranded névé and glaciers: the Nyonni Ri Group (6,730m), explored by the 1935 Everest Expedition. Closer scrutiny revealed roads scarring the Tibetan landscape, the first time I've ever seen any roads from atop a Himalayan peak.

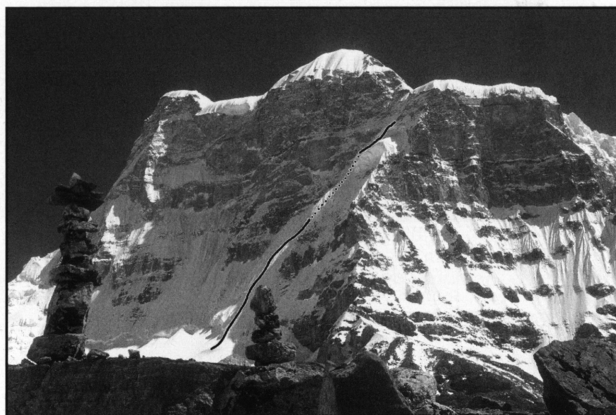
We were back down to the saddle, and the others, at 4 p.m. Deciding not to retrace the traverse, we made the short climb up to the summit of the sub-peak and rappelled down the teetering tower as darkness enveloped us. We all made it back safely to base camp the next day to find that John's condition had worsened. He was the only member of the climbing team not to acclimatize, and eventually he had to be evacuated by helicopter.

TIM MACARTNEY-SNAPE, *Australia*

## JANAK HIMAL

*Janak, East Summit, south face attempt.* A six-member team from Aoyamagakuin University Alpine Club tried to climb the virgin East Summit of Janak (7,041m) via the route on the right side of the south face, attempted in 2005 by Slovenians Miha Habjan and Andrej Stremfelj. Ages of the members ranged from 20–66, the latter that of the leader, Tsugio Iwai. Unlike the Slovenian duo, the team operated in heavyweight style, using climbing Sherpas and fixed rope.

On September 29 they established base camp at 5,200m on the Broken Glacier, then made two advanced camps, at 5,400m and 5,850m. On October 10 Masayuki Murakami and a Sherpa bivouacked high on the south face at 6,650m. The next day they started for the summit but gave up at 6,700m.



Janak from the upper Broken Glacier to the southeast. The route attempted by the Japanese on the south face is marked. The left skyline, leading directly to the 7,041m main summit, is the southwest pillar, climbed in 2006 by Andrej Stremfelj and Rok Zolokar, to make the first ascent of the mountain. *Lindsay Griffin*

HIROSHI HAGIWARA, *Chief Editor ROCK and SNOW, Japan*