



**THE HIMALAYAN CLUB**

*Climbing and Beyond...*



# E-LETTER

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Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden during the first ascent of Gave Ding 6571m in Nepal  
(ED+ 1600m, 7 days) [Photo: by archive Mick Fowler Paul Ramsden]

# E-News Letter

## Volume 33. January 2016

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## Climbs and Explorations

### Eastern Himalaya

#### First ascent of San Lian East

Three Polish alpinists, Marcin Rutkowski, Wojciech Ryczer and Rafal Zajac, filled in another blank space on the map of China's Minya Konka massif with their five-day ascent of San Lian Southeast (6250m), an unclimbed mountain in the Daxue Range in western Sichuan near Tibet.

The three climbers first heard of the peak in Japanese explorer and photographer Tamotsu Nakamura's 2012 article about Sichuan's best-unclimbed mountains in the *Japanese Alpine News*. Ryczer says they were unable to find any documented attempts of the peak, although they heard rumours of an unsuccessful Korean expedition.

The three climbers flew from Poland to Chengdu on October 15, then travelled to Hailuoguo National Glacier Forest Park and the mountain. They ferried gear to base camp at 4150 meters and acclimatized by establishing advance base camp below a crevassed glacier and San Lian peak.

The team wrote in a trip report: "Finding a safe route through the huge and cracked glacier was--next to acclimatizing--our primary task at this stage of the expedition." After negotiating a route up the glacier, they considered the best route to the summit. "The south face looked more interesting than the north face," said Ryczer, "with delicate climbing and several mixed pitches."

Ryczer led the first pitch, dry tooling (M7) up dry, solid rock, on the afternoon of November 6 and fixed a rope. They bivouacked that night in a tent below the wall, intending to start early in the morning. The following day they ascended their fixed line, then climbed several dry rock pitches to a section of delicate ice. They spent the afternoon climbing technical, vertical mixed terrain, interspersed with lower-angle rock, which they simul-climbed whenever possible, to reach a suitable bivy spot.

On the third day, they continued up a wide, snowy section to reach a rock barrier by easy dry tooling. That evening they rappelled to a spacious bivouac ledge below a snow-filled couloir they thought would lead to the summit.

The next morning they climbed rock sections whenever possible to avoid loose, unconsolidated snow. "We were thinking that the next section would be easier than the lower part of the face, but...we found that this snowy couloir was quite vertical," Ryczer said. "The snow was not solid, and there was no ice." By midday, the trio reached a ridge, then continued climbing to a sitting bivy on a small ledge. Here, Ryczer dropped his sleeping bag. He spent the night wrapped in a tent for warmth.

On the fourth day, November 10, the team climbed another ten pitches, reaching the summit at 2 p.m. To descend, they traversed below the summit ridge and began rappelling down to the glacier. At 3 a.m., halfway through the descent, Zajac fell into





The south face route climbs gullies and couloirs to a final exposed ridge. The climbers descended a ridge, then down a hanging glacier. [Photo: Wojciech Ryczer]

a crevasse. His fall was arrested by his teammates, who helped him climb back out. Soon after his fall, the team bivied again to avoid more incidents, continuing the descent in daylight and returning to advanced base camp by midday.

They rated their south face route ED2 M7 WI5 R, 1450 meters. Despite the Polish expedition's success, San Lian's Northwest (6368m) and Central peaks (6350m) remain unclimbed, along with several higher peaks in the Minya Konka massif, including Longshan (6684m) and Mt. Chu (6468m).

*From The Alpinist*

## New Routing in China's Gangga Range

Between October 16 and 24, 2015, Norihide Yamagishi, Paul Manson and Ed Hannam made the first ascent of an unnamed 5207-meter peak on a self-supported expedition to the remote Gangga Range in western China's Sichuan Province. This spectacular region on the eastern edge of the Himalaya was brought to their attention by Japanese alpinist and explorer Tamotsu Nakamura. Nakamura made dozens of expeditions into the Sichuan ranges over the last two decades, documenting numerous unclimbed peaks and mapping the area's mountains.



Panorama of the central part of Gangga Massif's eastern faces seen from Lazika. [Photo: Tamotsu Nakamura]

We believe ours is only the second of forty 5000-meter peaks in the area to be climbed. "Only one peak—Tsala Mashu Ri (5160m)—was ascended by a Spanish party in April of 2013," Nakamura says. To our knowledge, the only other attempt was a previous trip I made with other partners in 2014. We failed to summit because of team problems.

Following a two-day drive from Chengdu, we set out from a trailhead at 4200 meters with nine days of supplies. We brought neither porters nor pack animals, carrying all of our food and equipment ourselves. Our team approached the peak by a valley that nomads use to descend to their winter homes beside the Yalong River.

We set up a high camp at 4900 meters, within 100 meters of the north face of Peak 5207. After various high scrambles to acclimatize and view route options before our first attempt, we climbed five pitches of seventy-five degree M6 ice with below-average protection. Yamagishi fell twice here, and lost an ice tool, before we turned back.

Our second attempt took a meandering line of easier M4, and exposed traverses, to reach the obvious central couloir. Once there, we were surprised to find that rather than leading to a summit ridge, the couloir finished at a corniced notch between vertical towers at around 5150 meters. We chose to turn back at nightfall and descended by eight rappels to get back to the moraine.

After a rest day, during which we experienced the only bad weather of the trip, we made our third attempt of the peak. We decided to follow the same meandering line as before, but this time crossed the central couloir, then traversed exposed snowfields

along the base of ascending buttresses. From there we made our way to the summit via a short corniced ridge, topping out around 12:30 p.m. We spent twenty minutes recording topographical information to compliment Nakamura's earlier data, then descended to our previous rap route, and from there to the base of the wall.

We named the mountain Asura Peak after considering the mountain's many distinctly different aspects and asymmetry. Asura is a Buddhist deity that inhabits the next world above humans and appears in different forms depending on one's perspective. Dozens of future routes exist on the peak's north face, while the southern aspects remain almost totally unexplored. Our trip was based on the idea of first ascents done without support, with a focus on minimalism—a style that holds enormous potential for future climbs in the Tibetan ranges.

*From The Alpinist as narrated by Ed Hannam*

## Sikkim and Nepal Himalaya

### Ukrainian Climbers Score Major Route on Mt. Talung

Two Ukrainian climbers made the first ascent of the long, difficult north-northwest pillar of Mt. Talung, a 7348-meter peak on a ridge that juts south from Kangchenjunga and forms part of the border between Nepal and Sikkim.

Between October 18 and 25, Mikhail Fomin and Nikita Balabanov climbed the 2350-meter pillar, calling their route Daddy Magnum Force (M6 A16 A3; with an overall route difficulty of ED2). Fomin and Balabanov reported the route was very steep and reminiscent of winter climbing around Chamonix but “with heavy packs and [at elevations] higher than 6000 meters.”

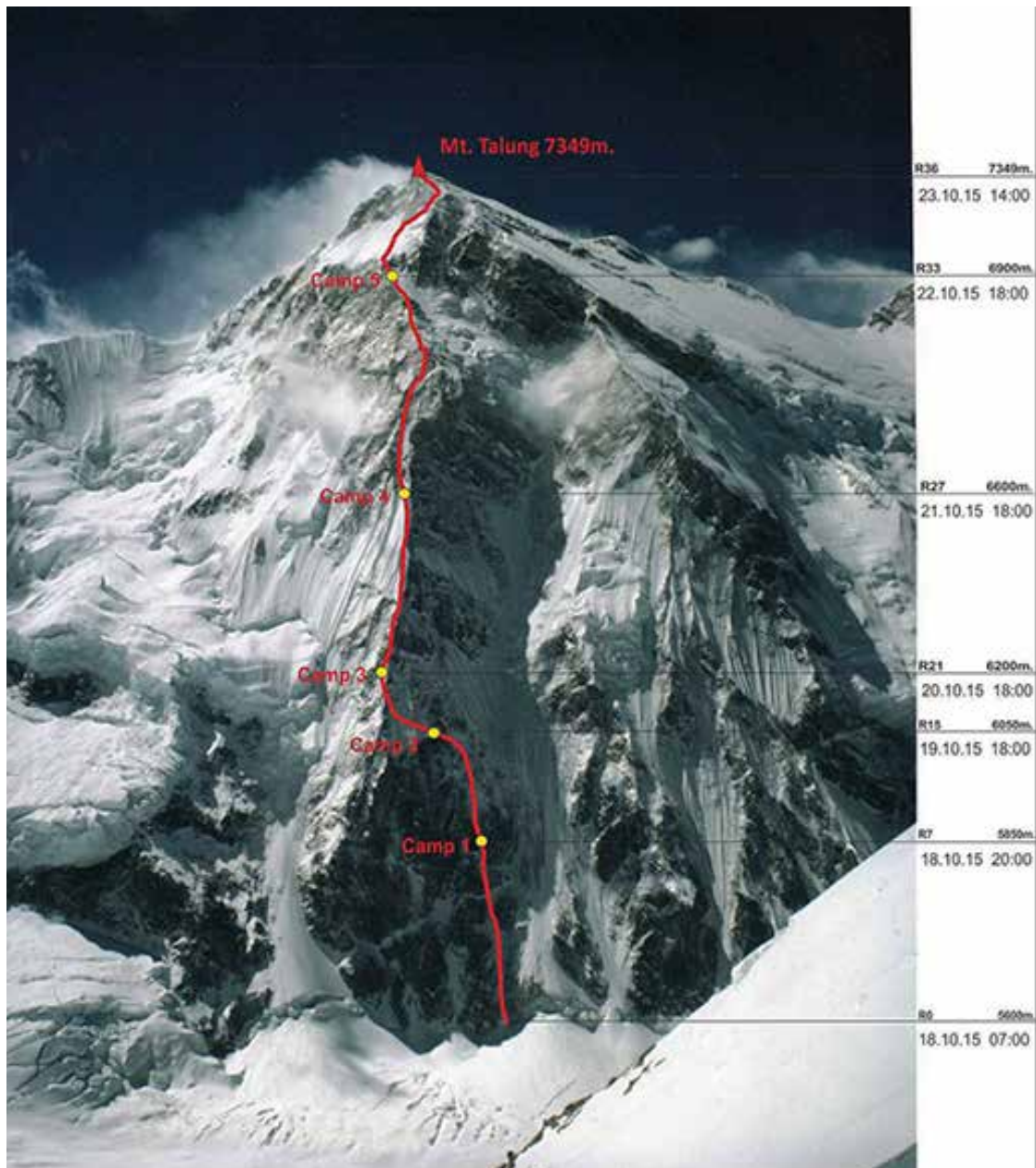
“The route showed both of us how much we still have to learn in the Himalaya and how much we already can do,” Fomin said in an email interview with *Alpinist*. “Each of us lost ten to fifteen kilograms of weight during the ascent. The experience and huge motivational charge we received at the end was really worth it.” The route is a notable prize for the Ukrainians as interest in the buttress has heated up during the past decade, especially among European alpinists.

Mt. Talung's north side boasts two prominent spurs, both around 2000 meters high: the striking north-northwest pillar and the less attractive northwest spur.

“The line was capturing more and more attention from strong teams,” Fomin said, noting that it was a “now-or-never” situation.

After learning that the Kangchenjunga region of the Himalaya remained open to climbing after the April 2015 earthquake, “there were no doubts which mountain we should try to climb,” Fomin wrote on [mountain.ru](http://mountain.ru). “After our first ascent of Langshisa Ri's (6427m) northwest spur last year, we felt that we [were] ready for some larger targets and could climb more technical terrain at a higher altitude. Mt. Talung seemed to be the ideal choice for us.”





The 2350-meter north-northwest pillar of Mt. Talung in the Kangchenjunga region, Nepal.  
[Photo: Mikhail Fomin/ Nikita Balabanov collection]

Fomin and Balabanov established base camp at Oktang (below the south face of Kangchenjunga) on September 28, and then spent two weeks acclimatizing. This included an ascent of Boktoh Peak (6145m) and a partial ascent up the west side of Mt. Talung, their planned descent route, to a bivouac at 7100 meters.

After acclimatizing, the pair was ready but a spell of bad weather grounded them, allowing some needed rest. After three days in base camp, they climbed to a higher camp below the pillar on Mt. Tulang. They carried food for seven days and gas for nine days.



The route started at 5600 meters by climbing over a large bergschrund at the cliff base, followed by hard vertical mixed terrain (M6) that led to difficult thin-crack aid climbing (A3) requiring pitons. Above, the pair climbed past a cornice and up thin ice on slabs with little protection.

The climbing on the first three days mimicked the initial pitches, with hard thin ice over brittle rock, long run-outs and dodgy protection. Bivouacs platforms were hacked into snow and ice, some taking two hours to excavate.

On the third day they climbed around a large gendarme, then up more thin ice. About halfway up the pillar, between Camps IV and V in the photo, is a wide rock band, which had been a question mark in the climbers' minds since leaving base camp. Like the lower half of the route, the band yielded hard mixed climbing on thin ice over rock slabs.

Above the technical climbing, the pair climbed fast and reached an ice ramp that led to the summit ridge. Here they chopped out a ledge for their tent. On their next day, October 23, they topped out.

“Our surrounding was like in a dream--the east face of Jannu and the south face of Kangchenjunga. We took some photos and a video panorama, ate a chocolate bar and ice cream from frozen energy gels and in half an hour started our descent.” The pair descended the west side of Mt. Talung, bivouacking at 6700 meters.

Their descent was down the west side of Mt. Talung, as they'd planned, with one bivouac at 6700 meters.

They named the route Daddy Magnum Force for all the difficulties they encountered during the trek to the peak and the acclimatization phrase. Fomin says, “ We recollected a favourite phrase of a mutual friend: ‘Guys, Daddy Magnum Force is taking care of you, and this is a small test from him to check whether you are persistent enough with your intentions.’”

Fomin and Balabanov's route recently won the coveted Crystal Peak award.

*From The Alpinist*

### **A New Route on Dzasampa Tse**

In October, four French climbers, Mathieu Detrie, Julien Dusserre, Pierre Labbre and Mathieu Maynadier, travelled to Nepal with the goal of climbing one of the three 7000-meter summits of Nangpai Gosum (also called Pasang Lhamu, after the first Sherpani to climb Mt. Everest).

They spent three days attempting the south ridge of Nangpai Gosum I (7351m) but retreated from 6400 meters because of unfavourable conditions. The team decided to salvage the expedition by attempting the nearby northeast face of lower Dzasampa Tse (6295m).

Dzasampa Tse is a minor peak next to the Nangpai Gosum group and nearby Cho Oyu (8201m), the sixth highest mountain in the world, along the border of Nepal and

China. The sub-peak was originally climbed in October 2004 by two Slovenes, Tadej Golob and Urban Azman, who were part of a larger Slovenian expedition that made the third ascent of Nangpai Gosum I. The pair climbed the southwest face by a route they named Mali Princ (TD+ M5, 600m).

After settling on the new objective, the French team elected to climb the peak in successive days in two teams of two. Dusserre and Detrie made the first attempt. The pair left base camp at 2 p.m., slogging for three hours across a moraine, its boulders still unstable from last spring's earthquake, and bivied below the northeast face. Early the next morning, October 17, they roped up at the bergschrund below the wall and climbed a 60-meter pitch, then climbed a long snow ridge with occasional M3 sections of 70 degrees to a gully with WI4+ ice.

Higher was the route's crux, a steep WI5 ice gully. The climbing here had thin ice and was difficult to protect with screws. They continued up, climbing 100 meters of 70-degree ice, then traversed around the summit serac. Above was a flat tedious section blanketed with two feet of unconsolidated snow, a tricky bergschrund crossing in loose snow, and the final summit ridge. At about 3 p.m. the pair was just a few dozen meters below the summit, but decided to descend because it was late and ominous clouds were building. They descended the southwest face, making ten rappels down ice and rock slopes to a col, then down climbing to base camp in darkness.

The next day, October 18, Labbre and Maynadier repeated the route, climbing faster by following the tracks from the previous ascent. The climbers named the route A la Verticale de la Peine, which Dusserre says is best translated as "Approach Punishment." The name originated from the dangerous and difficult hike across the unstable moraine to base camp.

*From the Alpinist*

### **Accident: Taboche's North Buttress**

On November 14 at approximately 1:30 p.m., Justin Griffin slipped and fell 100 meters to his death while descending from the summit plateau of Taboche (6541m; also called Tawoche) in Nepal's Khumbu Himal region. Griffin, a husband and father, and Skiy DeTray, a former Pararescueman with the U.S. Air Force, had just completed a new route up the demanding peak's North Buttress over five days. Below is DeTray's account of the expedition.

On October 18 we departed the U.S. for Nepal with two goals. The first was to volunteer with the Alex Lowe Charitable Foundation, continuing the construction of the Khumbu Climbing Center in Phortse, which facilitates training of Nepalese in climbing and rescue skills. The second was a hard climbing objective on Taboche.

Phortse, a lush village at about 4000 meters, is close to the route leading to Mt. Everest. Yak bells ring in the village while prayer flags decorate the Himalayan skyline. This volunteer opportunity proved a great chance to acclimate for our second goal.

After spending two weeks working with Justin performing construction work at the Khumbu Climbing Center, we trekked toward the remote village of Thugla on November 5. Two days later Justin and I stood in our base camp at the foot of Taboche's 1524-meter face. We planned to attempt a new route up the unclimbed North Buttress of the mountain. Taboche's north and east aspects hold some of Nepal's hardest technical alpine climbing routes with steep ice and mixed terrain. It's similar in difficulty to the North Face of Mt. Hunter in Alaska, but its higher elevation makes it more difficult.

The mountain was first climbed by its Southeast Face in 1974. Jeff Lowe and John Roskelley climbed the Northeast Face (VII 5.11 M6) in 1989, in alpine style, a ground-breaking ascent at the time. Additional noteworthy ascents include: Mick Fowler and Pat Littlejohn's 1995 ascent of the Northeast Pillar (ED, 43 pitches), Ueli Steck's 2005 solo on the East-Southeast Face (M5 60 degrees, 1500m), the Giri-Giri Boys' 2009 climb of the Direct North Face (AI5 R, 1500m) and Renan Ozturk and Corey Richard's 2010 ascent of the Central South Buttress (5.10 M4/M5, 1200m). With all the attention the mountain has received over the past 40 years, we were surprised to find that no one had ventured onto the North Buttress.

On November 8 we ventured up to take a look at the buttress. We were pleased to find the neve in great shape, the rock solid and the snow settled. The next day under sunny skies and a light breeze we ascended back to our previous high point of 5000 meters and cut a bivy in ice. Spindrift pummelled us all night, even though there was no precipitation. The next day we led five technical M5-6 pitches in a row. Unable to find a bivy site, we fixed a rope and rappelled 70 meters, and spent hours cutting a one-and-a-half-man bivy for our tent.

At this point, I didn't think we would complete the route—the climbing was slow and the top loomed high above. But we stayed cool and calm and plodded ahead, although our fears and doubts were overwhelming. After climbing more rock and perfect, near-vertical neve, we reached a 700-foot gully. The climbing was not difficult and solid protection was scarce. I surmounted a sugar-snow ridge at midnight and began excavating snow for our precarious bivouac. We made jokes, dreamed of cheeseburgers and reminisced about home.

The next morning we were gifted with spectacular views of Everest, Nuptse and Ama Dablam during our only three hours of sunlight while on the North Buttress. We soaked the sunshine up and lounged on our platform until 11 a.m. Four more wildly exposed traversing pitches brought us to a final bivy. Once again we chopped a ledge so narrow that half of my ass hung over the edge. I was terrified all night I would roll off and pull the tent into space. I hugged Justin's legs like a koala bear. For our final push to the summit Justin suggested that we take a single rope, light rack and little else—this meant no bivy gear. Our plan was to retrieve the stashed equipment during the descent. I didn't argue. This final day on the route was spectacular—immense exposure and steep granite. It was the best alpine climbing of my life. I led a steep pitch of AI5, M5R at 6100 meters with more than 1200 meters of exposure



below my feet. Collectively, we had forty years of climbing experience between us and were having fun. We climbed with confidence and joy.

As the cold shadows of day turned to night, we started to feel fatigued and restless to get to the top. While climbing, the temps were not bad, but by the end of our belay sessions we shook with cold. Justin, in the last six hours of the climb, found hidden gear behind folds of rock and kept volunteering to lead. His strength and courage were commendable. Justin kept saying, "We're doing it!" We are establishing a hard new route in the Himalaya. It felt good to be so close to our long-time goal.



At 6 a.m. on November 14 we crested the North Buttress onto the summit plateau. Taboche's North Buttress. Griffin and DeTray's route is in red. [Photo: Skiy DeTray]

The sun shined, the sky was blue and there was no wind. After topping the technical difficulties, we failed to realize the true summit of Taboche was another twelve-hour slog up crevasse-riddled avalanche slopes. Justin and I looked at each other and knew our climb was over.

We descended unroped most of the way down the peak's East Face gully. We laughed and joked and made plans to drink all the beer in the Thugla Lodge and eat french fries by the pound. Justin was excited to call his wife Laura and tell her the news of our success.

We were both tired and our ice axes were worn to a nub from all the dry tooling. Then, less than 100 meters from taking our harnesses off, I saw Justin turn around to down climb an easy Grade 2, bullet-hard, slippery ice step. He lost his footing and was gone.

Once I located Justin, I performed CPR, but could not revive him. I descended the rest of the mountain alone.

As I sit here now with numb fingertips and toes I can't help but question why we climb mountains. Is the experience worth the loss of life? The answer I found is simple. Climbing mountains is a way of life, a way to express our physical abilities and to face fear, doubt and insecurities.

I will never again rope up with my good friend Justin Griffin. Justin was far more than just a phenomenal climber. He was also a great family man. He did a fantastic job balancing his love for the mountains with his love for his wife Laura and young

daughter Alice. Justin, like many great athletes, possessed an intense burning desire to be great, to push himself to his limits and find the edge of what is possible.

*From The Alpinist*

### Tragedy on Nilgiri South

“When we started the climb, we knew that we could not come down the same line because the gully was too dangerous to descend,” Hansjorg Auer told Alpinist in a recent interview. «We knew we would have to go down the southwest ridge. In the end, we had no other choice. I was sure for the last 200 meters up to the south summit that something was wrong.»

On October 5, Auer, Alexander “Alex” Blumel and Gerhard “Gerry” Fiegl travelled to Nepal from Austria with the goal of climbing Nilgiri South (6839m), the lowest of three peaks in the Nilgiri Himal in the Annapurna massif. In 1978, a Japanese team completed the first ascent of Nilgiri South by its East Ridge. The Austrian team intended to climb Nilgiri South’s unclimbed south face.

Following a steep, tricky approach, they established base camp at 4600 meters on the moraine that sprawls beneath Nilgiri South--instead of relying on the previous site used by Japanese, Czech, and Slovenian expeditions. This decision allowed them to acclimatize 350 meters higher than the other teams, but required a lot of labour to create platforms for their tents.

According to Auer, acclimatizing on Nilgiri South proved difficult since there were few options for higher camps. Auer had an easier time adapting to the altitude than his teammates did, since he had just returned from Mt. Kenya (5199m) where he worked on a documentary with Reinhold Messner.

The team set up a bivy at 5200 meters, roughly 150 meters below the base of the climb, where they spent two nights continuing to acclimate. “We had only two nights at 5200 [meters], but we had no other options...we had to go for it,” Auer said. In the early morning of Oct. 23, they left the bivy and set off up a 600-meter gully filled with loose rock and steep ice in darkness to avoid dangerous daytime conditions. The team climbed unroped whenever possible for speed, only roping up on steep terrain.

“The problem was it was really hard, blank ice. It was really dirty and melted out,” Auer said. In order to escape the gully, they opted to climb a spire to reach the summit ridge. They hoped the spire would provide a safer and more aesthetic alternative. They named the feature Nilgiri Spire.

After reaching the top of the spire at 6780 meters, roughly 60 meters lower than the true summit, Auer, Blumel, and Fiegl descended Nilgiri Spire’s north ridge and then down climbed and rappelled steep and exposed terrain. They continued up to reach the summit of Nilgiri South at 11 a.m. on October 26.

“When we were on the spire, I recognized Gerhard was climbing a little bit slower, but at altitude your shape is often up and down,” Auer said.

From the top of the spire they were unable to descend the line they climbed. The only reasonable option was to continue to the summit, in spite of Fiegl's deteriorating condition. "But then we saw for the first time that something was truly wrong," Auer said. With high winds, they knew a helicopter rescue would be impossible. They paused on the summit for only two minutes and started down.

"After descending to 6500 meters, we could not go on, so we made another bivy and we tried to get him back. In the morning, he was better, but just for two hours and then his body was finished. He was falling on the part that was not steep--falling with no energy, not working against the fall," Auer said. While descending unroped on easy slopes, Fiegl fell approximately 800 meters to his death.

After the accident, Auer and Blumel continued to descend for four more hours, reaching the glacier at 6 p.m. They left behind their entire rack of cams, ice screws, wires, pitons, and bird beaks for anchors during the descent. "In the end, we finished with nothing. We used everything," Auer said.

The Austrian route marks the second successful ascent of Nilgiri South. According to Auer, Nilgiri South had at least five previous attempts from the south by Slovenian, Japanese, and Czech teams, who attempted either the Southwest Ridge or the South Face.



The route up and down Nilgiri South. The team rated their climb M5, 90 degrees. Auer noted that they tried to give an honest rating rather than letting the altitude obscure their assessment of the climb's difficulty. [Photo: Elias Holzknacht]

Auer grieves for his friend Fiegl: "We grew up in the same village in Austria, a small village with 2,000 people. We started climbing together, but in the end I can't say more than I'm sorry."

Following their return to base camp, two helicopter flights attempted to recover Fiegl's body. But they were unsuccessful. Auer said: "When we were coming back in the helicopter [on the second flight], I started to actually realize how amazing the line was that we climbed, that Gerry climbed. With all the blank ice and mixed climbing, we were really on the edge of our possibilities. Gerry stood on the summit of his biggest and most difficult climb and I'm thankful for that. I will never forget his shining eyes."

*From The Alpinist*



## First Ascents in Rolwaling Himal

Over three consecutive days, October 4 to 6, Nepalese climbers Nima Tenji Sherpa, Tashi Sherpa and Dawa Gyalje Sherpa ascended three unclimbed peaks—Raungsiyar (6224m), Langdak (6220m), and Thakar-Go East (6152m)—in the Rolwaling Himal in north-eastern Nepal. This probably marks the first time that an all-Sherpa team has completed first ascents of unclimbed peaks in their home country, according to Himalayan record-keeper Elizabeth Hawley.

The Rolwaling region contains many unclimbed peaks and is popular with trekkers. In 2014 the Nepalese government opened 104 peaks to climbing, including many in the Rolwaling Himal. Their intention was to increase revenue from tourists and climbers by selling climbing permits. In the past year, the range has attracted many small teams who did first ascents of unclimbed peaks as well as new routes on others.

The three Sherpa climbers left Rolwaling Valley and spent two-and-a-half days crossing the Trakarding and Drolambau glaciers to a high base camp. On October 4, the trio pushed up the west ridge of Raungsiyar, reaching the summit at 3:15 p.m. and returned to camp three hours later. The following day they climbed to the west summit of Langdak before following the corniced West Ridge to the main summit. Nima Tenji reported on their expedition blog that Langdak offered the best view of any mountain he had climbed, with six of the world's fourteen 8000-meter peaks visible.

On October 6, the Sherpa climbers made their final first ascent, climbing Thakar-Go East, a lower subsidiary summit of Thakar-Go (6793m). They climbed directly up the Northeast Ridge, passing sharp pinnacles at the start then following a long snow ridge. Dawa Gyalje reported to Alpinist: «We celebrated our team success with a big hug, and yelling on the summit.»

Dawa Gyalje said: “We are hoping as young climbers, to take climbing in Nepal to a new level. All of us have climbed much bigger mountains but always with foreign



Ryan Waters during the descent from Jabou Ri's (6166m) summit ridge, with Thakar-Go East in the distance on the right. [Photo: Eric Larsen]

climbers. We want to show that we are not just porters on the mountain, climbing only for our livelihood, but we are interested in climbing because we enjoy it, too.” He said that they can climb safely, are good leaders, can manage their own logistics, and hope that Sherpa climbers will receive sponsorships. “We are the young generation of Sherpa climbers but we are looking to the future of Nepal and Sherpas also.”

Janice Sacherer, an anthropologist and climber, said: “These recent achievements symbolize a whole new stage of Himalayan mountaineering.” The three Sherpa climbers are all certified mountain guides from the Rolwaling valley. These climbers “are prepared to take Nepalese mountaineering to the next level.... They are young, informed, and have learned enough safety techniques to enjoy climbing for its own sake. They are also ambitious and out to make a name for themselves and their home community of Rolwaling by climbing alpine style.”

### **Mingma Gyalje Sherpa Climbs New Route on Mt. Chobuje**

A week after the triple ascents, Mingma Gyalje received a climbing permit to make a solo ascent of a new route on Mt. Chobuje (6685m) above the Rolwaling Valley. The mountain was special to him since it rose above his childhood home. Mingma wrote on his blog: “I grew up seeing the mountain each day.” On October 27 he climbed with three other Sherpas to a base camp below the icy West Face. After leaving camp at 4 a.m., he scrambled up rock bands and then started up steep snow and ice slopes. The climbing was difficult and unrelenting, with no resting places. He called it “the hardest mountain I ever climbed.”

After thirteen hours of climbing, he reached the summit ridge and followed it to the top. He descended the easier back side in a whiteout, getting lost in the snowstorm and spending two nights bivouacked in snow holes before being rescued by a helicopter, which brought him down to his village where his mother, sister, and friends waited. Mingma said, “Once we landed at the door, [everyone] came to me crying which I felt [bad about] because it was my fault for going solo on such a difficult mountain.”

### **Khumbu Valley**

Jon Gupta and Will Harris returned from a five week trip to Nepal’s Khumbu Valley. After acclimatising on Lobuche East they unsuccessfully attempted new routes on Kangshung (6061m) and Kyajo Ri (6186m).

Upon reaching their basecamp on Kangshung they were met with three days of unseasonably heavy snowfall, resulting in a change of objective from the mountains rocky south-east ridge to its snowy west ridge. Unfortunately the fresh snow remained unconsolidated on the western aspect, giving dangerous conditions and resulting in retreat from approximately 5750m.

It is worth noting that after April’s earthquake it was business as usual in the Khumbu, with trails and lodges back in action. Visitor numbers were roughly half of normal levels, giving pleasantly quiet trails but having a negative effect on local businesses.

*By Will Harris from the Alpine Club News*

## First overall ascent of Gave Ding 6571m

*Paul Ramsden reports:* The trip was unusually exploratory in that we had no picture of this side of the mountain before we departed and based the whole trip on satellite images from Google Earth (Gave Ding had the biggest shadow in the region).

The trip got off to a poor start when my bags failed to turn up on the flight and the Indian fuel blockade of Nepal threatened to bring everything to a premature halt. However the bags showed up later in the day and some black market fuel got us onto the 16 hour road to Nepalgunj. We flew into Simikot, then the walk into base camp was another four days. The mules stopped a day's walk short of the face but near enough for our purposes.

Once we got a good look at the north side of Gave Ding, we knew we were potentially in for a 'good one'.

The east and west sides of the north face were threatened by avalanches slopes and serac bands, leaving only one feasible line, pretty much up the centre of the north buttress. The lower section had a lot of steep mixed climbing (wore two teeth of my ice axe picks!) and was quite complex, weaving a route through overhangings and up grooves. A bit reminiscent of the Eiger in the complexity of the route finding. The upper third was more a of a classic steep ridge line, similar to the Peuterey.

The conditions were unusually cold for this time of year and we both suffered minor cold injuries. The route required five days in ascent and two in descent, initially down the south ridge and then down a colour on the north side (25 Abolakovs).

Overall it was a real pleasure to climb a virgin summit, via a hard route that offered the only feasible line of ascent from the north side. Grade ED+ 1600m.

*From The Alpine Club News*



Mick Fowler high up on Gave Ding 6571m in Nepal (ED+ 1600m, 7 days), climbed with Paul Ramsden [Photo by archive Mick Fowler Paul Ramsden]



## American Team Climbs Jabou Ri

Besides the Sherpa climber ascents, Americans Ryan Waters and Eric Larsen visited the area in September. The pair aimed to explore unclimbed peaks above the Drolambau Glacier next to 5755-meter Tashi Lapsa pass, including Jabou Ri (6166m) and Thakar-Go East (6152m).

The team trekked into the Rolwaling Valley in late August, arriving in the village of Na on September 3. They continued up the valley until they were below the peaks. Here their porters left and the climbers shuttled loads onto Drolambau Glacier. After a bad weather spell, they established a camp southeast of the peaks on September 10 and focused on climbing the elegant south ridge of Jabou Ri.

With a weather break, they kicked steps up snow slopes to the ridge, then returned to their high camp to prepare for a summit attempt. Early the next morning they left camp and reached the ridge at first light. Waters and Larsen climbed the east-facing side of the ridge to a steep section where they encountered firm ice and snow. They regained the ridge and continued climbing for several hours on terrain up to 60 degrees before stopping before a narrow section.

Waters sat on the knife-edge ridge, belaying with one leg hanging over either side of the ridge and watched clouds envelope them. The climbing ahead looked difficult, with cornices and steep drop-offs, and would be difficult to reverse in bad weather so they chose to retreat here.

Back at base camp, the climbers mulled over their next plan before the porters returned in a few days. No time remained to scout Thakar-Go East, their other objective, for possible lines, but Waters and Larsen found they could reach a glacier below the northeast flank of Jabou Ri and attempt an easier route to its summit. They left camp at midnight, navigating through large boulders in a moraine to the glacier where they found a straight-forward route to the virgin summit. Most of the climbing was on moderate snow with a few short, steep sections up to 55 degrees. The climbers reached the summit on September 16 under clear skies.

Waters said that many new routes await climbers on Jabou Ri, including direct ice lines up the east face. Thakar-Go East offers some “really impressive climbing lines on both the south side, steep mixed rock and ice routes, and the north side, which can be accessed by a glacier to a steep jagged ridge line,” Waters said. The three Sherpa climbers made the first ascent of Thakar-Go East, a lower subsidiary summit of Thakar-Go (6793m), the following week.

*From The Alpinist*

## Kumaun and Garhwal

### Bhagirathi – III (6454m)

This difficult peak received two attempts in 2015. One of them was unsuccessful due to bad weather

In June 2015, an eight member all women's IMF expedition led by Bianca Dias reached a high point of 6338m on the peak. The team reached Gangotri on June 3 and established the base camp on June 7. Subsequently they face severe weather and snowfall. They reached Camp 2 at 5845m on June 17. A summit camp on the col between Bhagirathi II & III was established on June 18. A subsequent summit push was attempted on June 21. The team had to retreat from 6338m due to bad weather.

A team led by Debabrata Mukherjee attempted the peak in September 2015 from the north ridge. On August 28, the Pathajatra Club team left Kolkata for the mountain. The team reached Gangotri (3048m) on September 3. The established the base camp at Upper Nandanban on September 6. 4802 m (30°54'21.3"N/79°09'04.7"E). Camp-I at 5343mtrs was established on September 7 after a 2.6 km, 30° - 60° scree slope walk for about 2 hours. On September 8, HAPs established Camp II. On September 9, the team moved up to Camp I by 12.30 pm. On 10th September, climbers from Camp I started load ferry to Camp II. On 12th September 1200m of rope was fixed to reach the Summit Camp. The summit camp was established on 13th September at 6090m on the col connecting Bhagirathi III & IV. On a clear September 14 morning, 4 members fixed 450m rope on the summit route. An early morning start at 3 am on a warm and clear day ensured that the team reach the summit. The first 50 m walk on the open arête just on the Col was enough to chill the bones and warm up the blood. At about 9.30 am the team reached the tri-junction of North ridge and North-West ridge above the NE face. Naveen was trying to cut the cornice to climb up. But later took the decision to traverse some 25 m over 85° NW face to reach the corner of the final summit hump. Some of our members misunderstood and wanted to stop



Bhagirathi III [Photo: Debabrata Mukherji]

and celebrate the climb. But Debabrata pointed to them the last sentinel, a 7m high rock wall some 40m away. The team climbed for the next 30 minutes and then traversed the final 60 m 40° arête to reach the summit at 11.15 hrs. The team was atop Bhagirathi-III crossing at 257.3 aerial m and climbing 365 m height. (6454 m, 30°52'16.5"N/79°07'56.1"E.) Photos, puja, GPS reading and walkie-talkie chats were done for next 40 minutes. The view from the top was astounding. Towards the west the peaks standing on the western bank of Gangotri glacier were majestic. We could see from

there the top of Kharcha Kund, Sumeru, Kedardome, Kedarnath, Kirtistambh, Meru group of peaks and Shivling East & West. Thalaysagar, Bhartekunta and Bhrigupanth were peeping behind them. In the North Bhagirathi-II was looming large partially blocking the view of Sudarshan group. The team could see Srikailash, Nila-Pila, and Radhanath Parvat above Chaturangi glacier. The NE and north is half covered by the Vasuki Parvat. But behind the flat summit of Satopanth and behind it far away Kamet and some distant peaks could be seen. The SE & South is covered by the highest sister of Bhagirathi group, the Sheer walls of Bhagirathi-I was the closest.

It took two hours to descend to summit camp. After dismantling the summit camp the team came down to Camp II by 17.00 hrs.

16th September: After a good night sleep and cleaning the camp area the team started for Camp I. The team reached Gangotri on September 18 and returned to Kolkata on September 22.

Summit members: Debabrata Mukherjee (leader), Gundala Jodhana, Manika Pradhan and Subid Ali.

## Himachal Pradesh

### New Routes in Unexplored Valleys of Northern India's Himachal Pradesh

Unsettled weather and dangerous snow conditions had derailed Paul Swinton's peak plans. Tent bound with climbing partner, Steve Kennedy, he lay in his sleeping bag as rocks, snow and ice tumbled down from the mountain, and sleep was elusive. He thought about the avalanche that nearly wiped out their camp the day prior, and wondered if conditions would improve or deteriorate before his time was up in this remote basin in Himachal Pradesh, India. Swinton welcomed the 2 a.m. alarm, and quickly scrambled out of the tent and into the frigid darkness.

To the southeast, Peak 5300 loomed in the blankness of night, jettisoning frozen missiles that passed just beyond the white pools of light cast by headlamps. Occasional, glittering flashes signalled their passage down the mountainside. The rocks fell away, bouncing and settling into the surrounding moraine.

On May 14 Swinton joined noted Scottish climber Andy Nisbet (UK - Team Leader), along with Bill McConachie (US), Steve Kennedy (UK), Robert Adams (UK) and Tom Adams (UK) to seek out unclimbed peaks in Himachal Pradesh. Financed by The Mount Everest Foundation and The Mountaineering Council of Scotland, the team's main objectives were Peak 6010 and Peak 5970, two mountains in a valley north of Kuddu.

Swinton's team headed north across the Darcha-Mayar valley and into a side valley, to establish a base camp at the mouth of a third, smaller valley, surrounded by peaks that rose abruptly from the earth. High altitude porter Mangal Singh joined Nisbet and McConachie for an attempt at Peak 6010, while Kennedy, Swinton and the Adams brothers, along with Lakpa Sherpa attempted Peak 5970.





Peak 6010m, taken from high camp on Peak 5970m, showing route and location of high camp. [Photo: Tom Adams]

On May 31, Nisbet and McConachie cramponed up a couloir on the southwest face of Peak 6010, and camped on the south ridge at 5730 meters. The next morning Nisbet remained at high camp, recovering from a respiratory illness, while McConachie climbed the south ridge of the peak. The fresh snow was surprisingly stable, and he easily negotiated several short, rocky steps to reach the summit of Peak 6010. There, McConachie discovered

evidence of an earlier summit climb: bamboo wands, likely placed by climbers who had accessed the peak from Shingo La Pass. A trekking route there divides Jammu and Kashmir, to the north, and Himachal Pradesh, to the south, and access to Peak 6010 would be a tempting climb for trekkers on the pass. The new route on Peak 6010 was assigned an alpine grade of PD+ (Peu Difficile+).

Meanwhile Kennedy, Swinton and the Adams brothers climbed to the east ridge of Peak 5970, in the same valley. They established an advanced base camp on a rock outcrop at 5550 meters, and on June 1, climbed higher on the ridge. Conditions on the peak were much different than those McConachie encountered on Peak 6010. The heavily-corniced route masked the ridge, and loose snow collapsed and fell away beneath their feet. The team climbed to 250 meters below the summit, then retreated to base camp. The weather worsened, and they stayed at camp for several days.

Finally, on June 6, Kennedy and Swinton, along with Lakpa Sherpa set out in the afternoon to attempt an unclimbed peak located on the east side of a valley they had crossed on their approach to base camp, north of Kuddu. The peak was identified on an available map as 5300 meters. The three men climbed to about 4700 meters and established an advanced camp on snow, alongside a small moraine slope in the lower reaches of an enclosed cirque on the northwest side of the peak.

In the evening, Kennedy and Swinton gathered water from a waterfall, where they witnessed a slow moving avalanche heading towards their camp.

“It was humongous,” Swinton told *Alpinist*, “[the slide was] heading right for our tent, and there was no time to move camp. We watched it come down, and were relieved when the slide suddenly turned in another direction with the slope of the mountain. It narrowly missed the tent, but we had an uneasy night after that. We could hear rocks and snow whipping by the tent, and were relieved to get up at 2 a.m.”



Swienton on the summit of Sgurr Kuddu. [Photo: Steve Kennedy]

On that early morning of June 7, Kennedy and Swienton set out on good neve, via the cirque on the northwest side of Peak 5300.

“The rock was very loose. We would tap it for soundness and a lot of it pulled away. That was eye-opening,” Swienton says.

The team reached a prominent col east of the base of the summit snow cone, at an altitude of about 5170 meters, they estimated. The next 130 meters comprised 60- to 75-degree snow, and a final exposed, rocky corner and snow arête.

After four and a half hours of mixed climbing on steep snow, ice and crumbling rock, the two men stood on the westernmost and higher of two rock pinnacles at the summit of Peak 5300. As the morning sun lit up the Darcha Valley below, Swienton and Kennedy relished their position, and their timing. They spent forty-five minutes on the summit, admiring the views.

The team named the peak Sgurr Kuddu. “Sgurr” means sharp-pointed peak in Gaelic, and Kuddu refers to the area overlooked by the peak. “Sgurr,” growls Swienton, in a guttural tone befitting its Scottish roots. “You have to say it like that.” They gave the route an alpine grade of AD (Assez Difficile/fairly hard).

*From The Alpinist*

### **Team Authors New Lines in India’s Himachal Pradesh**

When Whitney Clark and Crystal Davis-Robbins set off in August on an expedition to the Indian Himalaya with only a picture of an unnamed peak nestled in the region’s 4250-meter Hampta Pass as their objective, they believed the peak in the photo was unclimbed. Even though the two met the previous winter in El Chalten, Patagonia, this expedition to the Lahaul and Spiti district in the state of Himachal Pradesh would be their first time climbing together.

Over two months, the women established two new routes. On September 17, they climbed the west face of the peak they saw in their photo, CB6a (5450m), by their route NibbiJibbi (5.10-, 400m). Their climb of CB6a could be its second ascent, as they unexpectedly found a cairn on the summit that they later learned belonged to a Finnish team. On September 29, they completed the first ascent of an unnamed 5100-meter peak in nearby Miyar Valley, by their line Poornima (5.10, 600m).

Before their expedition, Davis-Robbins connected with local climber Korak Sanyal over social media and they talked about the potential for climbing undeveloped walls in the region. The women later met Korak and his twin brother Spandan. The brothers’ nicknames are Nibbi and Jibbi.

For their first climb in the area, the women packed twelve days worth of supplies and traveled by mule for three hours until sharp rocks in the moraine stopped the mules at 4300 meters.

Clark shared her account of the team's ascent of NibbiJibbi with *Alpinist* via email.

*After a day of recon and acclimatization, we moved camp to 4800 meters and spent a few hours digging out a tent site on the moraine above the glacier. Alarm set for 4 a.m., we nervously eyed an approaching electric storm and listened to light snow falling on our tent. The approach took us across the glacier toward the steep west face. We started toward a system about halfway up the gully and climbed steep frozen choss until we reached the base of the rock [and] started up slabby 5.7 terrain with frozen toes and fingers. Crystal took over and I got to enjoy first rays of the rising sun as she launched into some of the loosest rock I have climbed in the mountains. After a full rope length, the terrain steepened and I led the crux pitch of the route, which led us to the ridge. The crux was 5.10- and consisted of a steep bulge and fine crack climbing on good rock. Once on the ridge, we simulclimbed on easy terrain for 100 meters and made our way toward the east face where the rock steepened. We switched leads for three more 60-meter pitches of 5.8 and 5.9 terrain and topped out on the summit around 2 p.m.*

They named their route after their friends Nibbi and Jibbi. "They are aspiring alpine climbers and hope to repeat the route someday," Clark said.

After a few days' rest, the pair set out on the next objective, an unnamed 5100-meter peak in the nearby Miyar Valley. Clark writes:

*We hiked to base camp [up the Takdung Glacier] in a day with ten days of food and used mules to get into the valley. Bad weather forced us to stay in base camp for the first five days but with clear weather coming, we packed four nights [of] food and headed up the Takdung on September 27. Heavy snow and an extremely loose moraine deterred us from venturing too far up the valley. We established camp at 4200 meters. Waking up to freezing temperatures [the next day], we got a leisurely start and got to the base of our intended route at 11:30 a.m. Crystal began climbing runout terrain to gain a large corner/chimney system. I led up the steep corner system and encountered really fun stemming, chimneying and wild face climbing up dikes and knobs. Crystal took the third pitch and climbed a steep 5.10 offwidth. Luckily there was smaller gear to be had as we didn't have a cam larger than a #4. I led the fourth pitch that started with an overhanging squeeze chimney followed by steep 5.10 finger cracks and stemming in the wide corner system. A few more long pitches of 5.8 and 5.9 climbing led us to [a false] summit, [and we continued up the final] 300 meters on the ridge on blocky and snowy terrain until we topped out at around 8 p.m.*

*Under the full moon, we down climbed the lower-angle terrain and opted to rappel the northeast ridge to avoid the flakes and chock stones found on our route of ascent. Eight or so rappels later, we found ourselves in the loose gully and finally made it back to camp around 2 a.m. We found no information about the peak and no signs of other*

ascents. We are not sure if it is a sub peak of Castle or a separate peak on its own. Our route is called Poornima (Sanskrit for full moon).

Both routes were established without bolts.

This trip was partially supported by a [Shipton/Tilman Grant](#).

*From The Alpinist*

### **Richard Kher falls to death while descending Kistal Peak in Himachal Pradesh.**

Richard Kher (28), a trained mountaineer and budding journalist from Mumbai, fell to his death into a 300 metre gorge while descending Kistal Peak (17,000 ft) in Miyar Valley, Lahaul-Spiti, Himachal Pradesh. The accident took place on August 29. Indian army's specialised force in high-altitude warfare, HAWS, retrieved the climber's body from the base of Kistal Peak Sunday evening, over a week after Richard fell into the gorge on descent.

Richard's climbing partner Sheriar managed to rappel down to the gorge immediately after the accident but could not move him to safety given the lack of equipment and the gradient of the location. Once he realised the situation was grim, he wrapped Richard in warm clothes and walked overnight to Udaipur in Himachal Pradesh, which is the closest town to get basic medical help. On hearing about the accident, mountaineers from the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports, located around 300 kms away in Manali, left for the spot but given the remoteness of the area it took them more than 24-hours to reach the site.

"On 6th September the army resumed the rescue operation after bad weather stalled them a day before. They had to use various equipment to get the body out of the gorge, says Mr Kher expressing his gratitude towards the armed forces for their numerous search and rescue attempts. Richard was an alumnus of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports. He had completed his Basic and Advanced Mountaineering courses from the institute.

*Adapted from the Outdoor Journal*

## **Ladakh and Zaskar**

### **The Hidden Paradise: Ryong Kharu Lungpa -Exploration of Ryong Kharu valley and climbs in Sagtoga glacier**

The much awaited permission to attempt peak Shahi Kangri finally arrived! And we flew to Leh on 17 July 2015 with great excitement and anticipation. However fate had something else in store for us.

As we were flying towards Leh, ominous clouds covered the entire Himalayan belt.



While we were landing, the clouds lifted and the sight of snow covered landscape, though very pretty, alarmed me. This was too much snow for July in Ladakh!

My fears were confirmed by the Army officials and our friends in Leh. This year the snow melt had just started and the water bodies were in spate. There was news of bridges being swept away and trekkers and local villagers getting stranded due to washed off routes.

Since our attempt on Shahi Kangri involved our negotiating a narrow nala for almost 14 km, we reluctantly shelved the idea of attempting Shahi Kangri.

We quickly came up with an alternative plan based on a brief session with Google Earth. The Army officials were most co-operative and we were given the green signal to change plans. With assistance from the Border Roads Organisation, on 23 July, our team of six – Rajesh Gadgil, Vineeta Muni, Sagar Shinde, Nikunj Vora, Kushala Vora and Divyesh Muni found us at Mundra, located on the road from Shyok village to Murgo running along Shyok river in the Eastern Karakoram mountains.

We were now playing blind. We camped next to the road and then set out on the next day – three teams in different valleys to check out the possibility of where we could safely head for a month of climbing. Out of the three options available to us, we chose Ryong Kharu Lungpa to explore. The valley was very beautiful, safe from objective hazards and did not require us to cross any swollen rivers.

It took us three days to establish Base Camp at 4665 m. Advance Base Camp was located at 5070 m on the junction of the various branches of Sagtogpa glacier that formed the catchment area for Ryong Kharu valley.

Just above our Advance Base Camp was the entrance to the first (Eastern) subsidiary of Sagtogpa glacier that was closest to us. We decided to attempt P. 6195 m at the

head of this subsidiary glacier. A few days were spent in acclimatising and locating a route to Camp 1 on the glacier.



Summit of Peak P6195 in the first Subsidiary of Sagtogpa glacier.  
[Photo: Divyesh Muni]

The weather remained disturbed. Clouds, snowfall and some rain too kept us on tenterhooks. But we were fortunate and did not lose more than a few days.

On 06 August, we were finally established in our Camp 1 at 5765 m. After rechecking the route, our team set off for the summit

on 08 August at 6.00 a.m. The initial route was on the gradually ascending glacier. We then traversed to the other (Western) side of the glacier to the base of the south ridge. A steady snow climb of easy gradient followed by a rope length of 60 degree snow and ice brought us on top of the south ridge leading to the summit. An hour of climb along the ridge brought us to the summit by 11.00 a.m.

We were very fortunate to get excellent views from the summit. This enabled us to study the peaks and glaciers around and decide on our next objective. The adjoining subsidiary glacier 2 (Central) was not of much interest to us, but Glacier 3 (Western), a little further had a host of interesting peaks.

We wound up camp and were at Advance Base Camp on the next day. After some celebrations and much needed rest, we started preparation for the next objective, P. 6305 m at the head of Glacier 3, the main branch of Sagtogpa glacier.

The route to the snout of Glacier 3 involved us traversing a lush green ridge that took us gently all the way to Advance Base Camp 2 (5270 m), which we termed as "Paradise Camp". The camp was along a stream with beds of flowers all along. Coupled with grand views of the peaks around, the camp literally put us in "Paradise"!

A few kilometres of moraine and boulders led us to the snout of the glacier. We crossed onto the glacier and climbed gently towards our peak in the north. Since the distance to the base of the peak was long, we had to put an intermediate camp on 15 August at 5500 m.

A day of snowfall kept us back, but on 17 August we were at the base of our peak. We established our summit camp at 5860 m on the western slopes of the peak. After another day of bad weather, on 19 August, starting for the summit by 6 a.m. we initially traversed to the northern ridge, only to find that the ridge cumulates into steep rock towers. We skirted the summit pyramid from the western side at its base till we found a snow and ice gully leading to the south ridge. A 70 m climb at 50 degrees angle led us to



Gentle glacier towards Rongdo. [Photo: Divyesh Muni]

the top of the south ridge. We roped up and climbed the rest of the route to the summit by 11.30 a.m.

The day was exceptionally clear without even a wisp of cloud in the Horizon. We were rewarded with views all the way from Stok Kangri in the west to Saser Kangri Massif in

the north. Many unnamed and unclimbed peaks cluttered the eastern and southern horizons with a few known ones. We were excited to identify most of the peaks in view, many of which we had climbed, since we had explored the area over the last 17 years. We named our peak Sagtogpa Kangri since it is the most prominent peak of the Sagtogpa Glacier.

We now spotted a possible route to cross into the Rongdo valley that can link us up with the Nubra valley on our west. The prospect of finding a new route into the Rongdo excited us more than climbing another peak in the area so Rajesh Gadgil and I visited the high pass, which we named as Sagtogpa col (5915 m) leading to the Rongdo to check the route down.

The crossing of the pass looked easy but the exit towards Rongdo was not visible. It could be a steep drop or an ice fall or a rock face.... We could not judge without actually attempting the crossing. We decided to go for it.

Six of us with three days of rations and minimum gear decided to make an attempt the next day. We were supported by the rest of our team for the initial section of the descent. In case the route proved dangerous or not negotiable, they could have helped us to retrace our steps.

On 20 August, as we walked down the glacier after crossing the pass, we were greeted by a gentle glacier going down towards Rongdo. Our support team returned from that point and the six of us continued down the glacier towards the lush green Rongdo valley.

That evening, we camped at 5135 m, next to some high altitude lakes. It took us another two days to exit at Rongdo village. To our horror, we discovered that the devastating cloud burst in Nubra valley had broken the path to Rongdo in several places requiring us to use our climbing skills to negotiate the route. The sting in the tail was the 10 km walk to Tsati village since the road between Tsati and Rongdo was also broken at many places.

What started as a disappointment of not attempting Shahi Kangri turned to be a blessing in disguise. The weather did not affect us as badly though it had devastated the rest of region. We had the privilege to explore one of the most beautiful valleys... ..a paradise indeed.

### Summary

A team of six climbers sponsored by The Himalayan Club under the leadership of Divyesh Muni, explored Ryong Kharu valley and Sagtogpa glacier of the eastern Karakoram. They achieved two first ascents (P. 6195 m and Sagtogpa Kangri - 6305 m) and also made the first crossing of Sagtogpa col (5915 m) into Rongdo valley thus linking Shyok and Nubra valleys.

*By Divyesh Muni*

## Climbs in Temasa Nala

The team flew from Delhi to Leh on 22 August and after acclimatising spent 2 days driving to Padam via Kargil.

It took a further 2 days to establish our base camp at 4,153m near the confluence of the Temasa Nala and the Korlomshe Tokpo, which we did on 27 August. This was much lower than we had hoped and it was necessary to establish an advance base just below the Korlomshe glacier at 5,100m. This was occupied on 30 August.

Only a small non-climbing team led by Kimikazu Sakamoto in 2012 is known to have entered the Korlomshe Tokpo and they ventured no higher than ~5,100m to photograph the major peaks. From our advance base camp at 5,135m we explored the lower regions of the Korlomshe Glacier and successfully climbed PK 5916 via its glacial SE ridge at Alpine Grade AD, making the first ascent on 1 September (DB, DC, GM). It was climbed by a second team on 4 September (KT, Liaison Officer). We chose to call this peak Kusyabla (Ladakhi for Monk).

After exploring the upper glacier we subsequently established a high camp at 5,500m on 7 September. From this camp 3 team members (DB, GM, KT) attempted the impressive 'Matterhorn-like' peak at the head of the valley, climbing the prominent SW snow/ice ramp leading to the steep west face which we then climbed until just below the rocky ridge at 5,900m (Alpine D) on 8 September. Time, not technical difficulty, caused us to retreat, which we required 4 full-length abseils. From the high camp on 10 September two members of the party (DB, KT) successfully soloed PK 5947 via its glaciated ENE face and SE ridge at Alpine grade AD to make the first ascent. This peak, which is NNW of Kusyabla, we called Temple (not wishing to use the Ladakhi word, Gompa).

After clearing camps we returned to Padam on 14 September and from there via Leh to Delhi and subsequently back to Europe.

**Team: Derek Buckle (Leader), Drew Cook, Gus Morton, Knut Tønberg, Stuart Worsfold**

The team gratefully acknowledges generous financial support from the AC Climbing Fund, the Mount Everest Foundation, and the Austrian Alpine Club. It also acknowledges the gift of equipment/clothing from Bergans and Duffler.

*From Alpine Club News*

## Unattached: First Ascent in Zanskar

This summer, when Rachel Spitzer, Lisa Van Sciver and I traveled to the Zanskar region of India, we could find few maps for the local mountains. The one that we used appeared to have incorrect information.

Equipped with a small photo of a peak from an article, we headed into the Dalung valley, the first of five valleys west of Pensi La (4485m).



Traveling south by bus from Ladakh, in Leh, India, we arrived to the vast Zaskar region on August 24. Zaskar, in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir, a historically conflicted border region, contains vast peaks, deep valleys and several villages. For fourteen hours we followed a windy road paralleling the Suru river. After the bus dropped us off, we loaded five horses with our equipment, crossed the wide Suru River and ascended a steep moraine to establish base camp 25 kilometres from the Buddhist village of Rangdum. Eventually the horses were unable to continue because of the sharp rocks that littered the moraine, so we unloaded our gear at an altitude of 4265 meters about two miles up canyon.

Soon after arriving, we realized we were in the wrong valley—our intended peak was nowhere in sight.

Unwilling to repack our gear and seek out our primary objective, likely located in a parallel valley, we spent the following days hiking around the surrounding area searching for a new climb. During our reconnaissance, we discovered several worthwhile objectives and settled on an unclimbed massif we named Tare Parvat (5577m)—Hindi for Star— which divides the Dalung and Chilung Nala valleys. We chose the objective because of its majestic cirque feature, mixed climbing terrain and direct approach.

On September 5 at 4 a.m., we left our high camp at 4876 meters and hiked under darkness, our vision illuminated by headlamps and stars. Soon we heard a loud



Anna Pfaff starting Pitch 3, rated AI4 M4 on Tare Parvat (Star Peak; 5577m). Their route Unattached (5.6 M4 WI3 AI4, 600m). Tare Parvat divides the Dalung and Chilung Nala valleys in the eastern part of Jammu and Kashmir in India's Zaskar region. [Photo: Rachel Spitzer]

cracking sound and took cover under nearby boulders before realizing it came from cracking ice. We giggled sheepishly and continued up the talus slope to access the start of our new line.

Starting up the route, we found thick water ice and moderate mixed conditions. Here we were able to climb quickly, placing only a few knife blades and ice screws for protection. As the route became steeper, we placed many more knife blades as they were the best form of protection for the thin seams on our line.

Reaching a prominent ridge midway up the route, the rock quality greatly deteriorated into unattached plaques resting upon one another. Here we took great care to climb a 215 meter section of loose, runout slabs.

Above the slabs, we unroped and maneuvered through third and fourth-class loose blocks for nearly 200 meters. Nearing the summit, we encountered rotten, sun-baked ice.

We named our line up Tare Parvat's northeast ridge Unattached (5.6 M4 WI3 AI4, 600m), which we completed in alpine style and without bolts in 15 hours from camp.

This trip was partially funded by support from American Alpine Club via the McNeill-Nott and Copp-Dash grants.

*From The Alpinist*

### **Ascent of Kakstet Kangri in winter**

The Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF) organised an 11 member winter expedition to Kakstet Kangri (6561m) in February of 2015. They climbed the peak from the south east side. The peak has been climbed before (HJ Vol 58, 2002, A date with the Timeless Mountains) though IMF has claimed it to be the first ascent.

## **Karakorum**

### **Polish Team Authors New Routes in the Tagas Mountains**

The Tagas Mountains, a small subrange of the Masherbrum Mountains south of K6 (7282m) in Karakoram region, has been off limits to alpinists for years. In 2015, four members of the Polish National Alpinism Team—Tomasz Klimczak, Maciej Bedrejczuk, Marcin Wernik and Maciej Janczar—received a permit to climb in the area. The climbers ascended three rocky peaks above two arms of the Lachit Valley during a month-long visit in September. They completed first ascents of two unclimbed mountains and a new route to a saddle on another they called The Ogre, but failed to reach its pointed summit.

The team traveled past the tiny village of Lachit and then northwest up Lachit Valley, a deep valley twelve miles south of K6 (7282m), to a base camp below a moraine at 4000 meters. After acclimatizing, they ascended a pointed granite peak, dubbed Goat Peak (4991m), and west of their camp.

The next objective was another unclimbed 5809-meter peak above base camp. On the first attempt, they climbed a glacier to a bivouac below the upper face but retreated the next morning because of avalanche danger. They tried again on September 4, climbing past the bivy spot and then simul-climbing 300 meters up ice slopes. Above, they worked up rock and ice gullies for ten pitches until nightfall. After two more pitches, they made an unplanned bivy at 5600 meters on a small ledge atop a rock buttress.

Snow fell that night from 2 a.m. until dawn, but the climbers, despite bad weather and a lack of sleep, continued up. Three more pitches, including the AI5 crux ice pitch up unprotected 15mm-thick ice, led to the narrow summit ridge. The four simul-climbed the ridge to the summit of what they later called Dream Walker Peak, reaching the top at 3 p.m. in thick fog. They started the descent in late afternoon, making 14 rappels in darkness from ice threads and piton anchors in constant snow and spindrift while “chilled to the marrow and exhausted,” Klimczak said. The team reached their tents on the glacier at 2:30 a.m. The route was named Rolling (D) Ice (ED1/2 M5 AI5 80 degrees, 1450m).

The team moved camp to another arm of the Lachit Valley a couple days later, planning to attempt several peaks. After scouting lines, they decided to attempt an imposing face with airy ridges and a sharp summit that they called the Ogre. The chosen line followed a couloir up the northeast face. After a bad weather spell, the team left base camp on September 18 and climbed to a higher camp below the face with four days of supplies.

On the first day, the four men simul-climbed 150 meters up the couloir, then roped up for nine steep ice pitches interrupted by another simul-climbing section to a bivy on snow. On day two they climbed 450 meters up the couloir on steep M5 terrain to another ice ledge bivy. The third day brought hard climbing up steep ice, an overhanging chimney, and M7 dry-tooling to a notch at 6004 meters. A rocky ridge headed north to the Ogre's summit but it was already late afternoon and the weather appeared ominous.

After checking the forecast, they decided to retreat, reaching the top bivouac late that night. The next day they rappelled down the couloir, reaching their tents at advanced base camp in the late afternoon on September 22. They named the route the Polish Couloir (ED2, M7 AI5 90 degrees, 1500m).

*From The Alpinist*

### **New Route on K6 West's (7040m) South West Ridge**

Scott Bennett wasn't about to let a variable phone connection keep him from sharing news about his team's new route on K6 West's (7040m) Southwest Ridge.

On July 6 the trio arrived in Skardu, the launching point for their expedition. This was Bennett, 30, from Boulder, Colo., and Zimmerman's, 29, from Bend, Ore., first trip to the region. Steve Swenson, twice their age, from Seattle, Wash., had been on fifteen

expeditions to the region over the past 35 years. During this trip the team made the first ascent of Changi Tower's (6500m) North Ridge (M6 5.10 A2, 600m), and the second ascent of K6 West (7040m) via the first ascent of the Southwest Ridge (M6 90 degrees, 1800m).

The men timed their ascents through small weather windows amid falling rain and snow.

The team began their climb on August 8 after establishing a safe passage through an icefall at the base of Changi Tower's (6500m) North Ridge, described by Bennett as "a huge maze of crevasses and teetering towers." They moved quickly through the complex icefall before starting up the lower ice fields leading to the North Ridge of Changi Tower. Continuing up the first 300 meters of the tower, Bennett, Swenson and Zimmerman reached the site of their first bivy. Here they reinforced a ledge with a tarp held in place with ice screws that they backfilled with snow and ice to widen the platform. Looking up on the ever-steepening wall, likely void of any substantial bivy ledges, they decided to climb the route in two instead of their planned three days.

On day two they pushed up the remaining 300 to 400 meters to the summit, encountering "perfect Styrofoam ice," Bennett said.

According to Bennett, they aimed toward a dihedral capped with an "overhanging offwidth with hanging icicles," cutting up the face. Nearly halfway up the open book, they switched their ice tools and crampons for rock shoes and climbed 5.10 terrain through roof cracks of varying sizes. Nearing the overhanging offwidth, which they didn't have the gear to protect, the team began looking for an exit. Bennett led a ten-meter runout traverse on 5.9 huecos that brought them to a ledge under low-angle snow leading to the top. They reached Changi Tower's summit at last light. Eighteen rappels down the route brought the team back to the glacier.

Back at base camp, the team aimed for their primary objective, the South Face of K6 Central (7100m). While scouting the route, a serac fell from the route's upper reaches and scoured their intended line. Searching for a new route, they found a promising line on the far western end of the K6 massif. "We're a conservative team when it comes to the risks and objective hazards," Bennett said.

They set their eyes on the striking Southwest Ridge of K6 West (7040m), offering "huge relief, steep mixed ground and a line free of objective hazard," Zimmerman recalled. On August 15, the team received a good weather forecast from Woodmency indicating high pressure for the foreseeable future.

With an open weather window ahead, the climbers hoped to take a few days to recover.

Their plans changed when Woodmency notified them of a severe storm expected to arrive on August 21. This wasn't enough time for Swenson to get his energy back. With Swenson out, only Bennett and Zimmerman departed base camp on August 17 at 10 p.m.



Under lightly falling snow, the duo traveled along a lateral moraine on the West Nangmah glacier to reach their small gear cache. Once at the cache, they rested for a few hours and by daybreak the storm had cleared.

From the glacier at 5100 meters, they climbed unroped along a snow and ice field to gain the ridge under warm and slushy conditions. Here, they set up an unplanned bivy on top of a steep snow slope at 5800 meters and waited for cooler conditions.

Starting up the Southwest Ridge at 3 a.m., the duo climbed firm neve. When the ridge became too heavily corniced, they traversed onto difficult mixed terrain on the steep north side of the ridge. Near daybreak, they navigated a series of ledges alongside a buttress, negotiating M6 terrain over pale-gray granite streaked with black. Soon the men reached a steep ice sheet leading to the top of a second buttress at 6600 meters where they set up their next bivy.

Departing at sunrise and leaving their tent in place, they climbed the remaining 400 meters of thinly crusted knee-deep snow. The final stretch took them five hours of kicking steps while “nearly drunk from the lack of oxygen,” Bennett said. They reached the summit at 1 p.m., completing the second ascent of the peak.

After returning to their tent at 4 p.m., the pair waited until nightfall to descend the west face when colder temperatures would make conditions safer. Fighting off sleep with Gu and caffeine tabs, Zimmerman led the pair down twenty V-thread rappels through the night bringing them level with their first bivy but still 500 meters to the north. After a long traverse on steep snow, they climbed a short pitch of vertical ice to regain the Southwest Ridge and reach their camp. Seven rappels later they arrived back at the base of the route on the glacier.

That night it began to snow. After waiting out a storm for three days, the men made their way back to town.

We caught up to Bennett soon after he and his team enjoyed a haircut and shave, “still on the high from climbing,” Bennett said. “It’s been a long trip.”

“It needs to be noted that there has been some confusion about the name Changi as a peak in the Amin Brakk group named Changui Tower (5700m) has in the past been misreported as Changi Tower,” Zimmerman wrote in a press release. “This mistake was found by a Polish team who attempted Changi Tower (6500m) in 2010 and has been confirmed by research completed by this 2015 team.”

*From The Alpinist, Sources: Scott Bennett, Graham Zimmerman, Rab USA, steveswensonsblog.blogspot.com*

## The Himalayan Club

### Annual Seminar 2016

#### Programme

The Himalayan Club will hold the Annual Seminar on Saturday, 13th and Sunday, 14th February 2016. It is open to all members and their guests. Leading mountaineers, explorers and writers will be presenting audio-visuals and illustrated talks on various topics.

Venue: Dadar Matunga Cultural Centre, 122-A, JK Sawant Marg, opp. Bombay Glassworks, next to Yashwant Natya Mandir, Mahim, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400016

Registration: A Registration fee for two days is Rs 200/- per person. It will include tea and snacks. Kindly register with the Club office or online on our website [www.himalayanclub.org](http://www.himalayanclub.org).

For more information, log on to <https://www.himalayanclub.org/downloads/circulars/annual-seminar-2016.pdf>

#### Mumbai Section

Mr Harish Kapadia has added 17 latest maps of North East India States to the "Himalayan Club Nawang Kapadia Map Library". The Himalayan Club thanks him for his generosity.

#### Kolkata Section

##### The 12th Sarat Chandra Das Memorial Lecture

Eminent Italian mountain historian Mirella Tenderini wowed a packed hall at the 12th Sarat Chandra Das Memorial Lecture hosted by the Himalayan Club, Kolkata Section in Kolkata on 30th October 2015.



Eminent Italian mountain historian Mirella Tenderini presenting her Talk

Tenderini who is an expert on K2, the second highest mountain in the world and has authored a number of books on mountains showed two rare films as a part of her lecture which kept the audience enthralled.

The proceedings opened with Dr Rupamanjari Biswas, Vice President of the Himalayan Club, introducing the great pundit Sarat Chandra Das and welcoming the speaker. Cesare Bieller, the outgoing Italian Consul General in Kolkata, spoke

next and he applauded the professionalism and passion of the Himalayan Club Kolkata Section and its members. Mr Beliere had earlier donated a large number of books to the Himalayan Club Kolkata section's library. He spoke about the "Italian mountain" K2 and his first introduction with Mirella Tenderini at the bottom of Mount Blanc in Italy!

Ms Tenderini then took the stage and started her presentation with a brief introduction to the history of K2. She then asked a silent film of around thirty seven minutes to be screened which had been procured with great difficulty from the mountain museum in Turin. This film had been shot by the acclaimed Italian photographer Vittorio Sella on the Duke of Abruzzi's expedition to K2 way back in 1909.

The rare footage was an eye opener for the audience as it showed the trials and tribulations of the team as they travelled from Rawalpindi to the base camp of the mountain. Difficult river crossings, swaying bridges, high passes and an inhospitable terrain were all brilliantly covered by Sella's adept camera work and vision.

Ms Tenderini then spoke about the unsuccessful attempts on K2 prior to the Second World War covering in particular the bold and brave attempt by Fritz Weissner and Pasang Dawa Lama Sherpa who reached a high point on the mountain just 700 feet short of the summit in 1939 and failed mainly due to logistical problems. This was possibly one of the great attempts on the mountain and may have re-written the history of K2.

Ms Tenderini then came to the "piece de resistance" of the evening – the footage from the successful Italian expedition to K2 in 1954 which was the first ascent of the mountain. The commentary of the film was in Italian by Ms Tenderini explained in English for the audience. "The Savage Mountain" was documented in all its moods and the equipment used by the mountaineers' way back in the 1950s was an eye opener for many of the budding climbers in the audience. The expedition was plagued by bad weather and the climbers had to sit it out in the high camps until the weather cleared. Using the "weather window" to their advantage Lino Lacedelli and Achille Compagnoni

reached the summit ably supported by Walter Bonatti who brought oxygen to the highest camp for the duo.

Dr Rupamanjari Biswas then congratulated Ms Tenderini for her brilliant presentation and requested



Club Members with Mirella Tenderini

her to return to Kolkata for another visit. The evening ended with Prabhat Ganguly a senior member of the Himalayan Club presenting a memento to Ms Tenderini. The members and guests then settled down for a cup of tea and snacks to end a memorable evening.

## South Africa Section

### Know your Hon. Local Secretary – Dr Stephen Craven

Stephen is no stranger to India and the Himalaya. He was introduced to the Himalayan Club in 1966 when he was a science teacher at Doon School by no less than Gurdial Singh, Hari Dang, Jack Gibson, R. Holdsworth and others. He has contributed immensely to the Club through regular articles on Potholing and speleology – science of caves. Some of these articles are



Dr Stephen Craven-  
Hon. Local Secretary of  
the Himalayan Club –  
South Africa

- ▶ India Underground. Himalayan Journal (1969) 29. 17 - 35.
- ▶ A brief review of Himalayan speleology. Journal of the Craven Pothole Club (1971) 4. (5), 281 - 283.
- ▶ Review of: Wilson J.M. 1976 Speleological Expedition to the Himalaya. Himalayan Journal (1981)38. 222 - 223.
- ▶ Review of: Gebauer H.D. (1983) 181 Caves of India and Nepal. Himalayan Journal (1983) 40. 236 - 237.
- ▶ Letter to the Editor about a probable karst area on the way to Kailash-Manasarovar (Tibet). Himalayan Journal (1983) 40. 247.
- ▶ Review of: Gebauer H.D. (1985) KURNOOL 1984. Abhandlung zur Karst und Höhlenkunde, Reihe A, Heft 21. Himalayan Journal (1987) 43. 184 - 185.
- ▶ Review of: Cílek V. (ed.) (n.d.) Czechoslovak Speleological Expedition to Nepal Himalaya '85 (Prague NPS) and Cílek V. (n.d.) Kras v. Nepale (Czechoslovensky Kras, Prague, NPS). Himalayan Journal (1989) 46. 234.
- ▶ Review of: Kliment Ohridsky 3. ed. V.V. Shopov, 1989 (University of Sofia Expedition annual for 1987 - 1988) pp. 5 – 27. Himalayan Journal (1990) 47. 232 - 233.
- ▶ Review of: Brooks S.J. & Smart C.M. (eds.) (1996) Caving in the Abode of the Clouds (Bradford-on Avon). Himalayan Journal (1996) 52. 308 – 309.
- ▶ Review of: Gebauer H.D. et al. (1995) Speleological Bibliography of South Asia including the Himalayan Regions 226 pp. (Germany: Armchair Adventure Press). Himalayan Journal (1997)53. 337.



- ▶ Mussoorie and Cape Town: Is there a connection? Himalayan Club Newsletter (2007) (60), 18 – 19.
- ▶ The Caves of Meghalaya Book Review
- ▶ Review of: Vernon K. (1997) The South African Everest expedition – the inside story (Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball; & O’Dowd C. (1997) the story of the first South Africans to reach the highest point on earth (Sandton: Zebra Press). Himalayan Journal (2000) 56. 247 – 249.

Histoplasmosis is Stephen’s favourite disease. He has collected every case in the Cape since 1978, and has published on the subject. It is largely, but not exclusively, a disease of tropical and sub-tropical areas caused by spores of the fungus *Histoplasma capsulatum* which live in bat guano. Cave explorers inhale the spores and, provided their immune systems are intact, make a complete recovery after a month or so. Much to his surprise he has received no report of the disease from the explorers of the caves in Meghalaya.

In his own words - *Apart from writing I regard my function to provide hospitality, local knowledge and assistance to HC members who come to the Cape, which I did in 2003 when Satya Dam was here.*

We know whom to look up in South Africa!

## News & Views

### News from Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF)

On May 19, the Hon’ble Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports graced the IMF Everest Golden Jubilee inaugural function at the IMF Complex, New Delhi. Next day on May 20, Hon’ble President of India hosted Golden Jubilee function at Rashtrapati Bhavan and on the same day Hon’ble Prime Minister of India invited the 1965 Everest Team Members at his residence.

The members of the 1965 Everest Team led by Captain MS Kohli (Leader) had very fruitful and interactive sessions with the respective IMF Zonal Chairpersons and their team members along with the other adventure enthusiasts.

During the current year more than 130 expeditions (Foreign- 50 & Indian- 80) have gone through IMF.

IMF conduct of the 3rd Climbathon organised under the supervision of Hon. Secretary Wg Cdr SK Kutty, Dr. Anil Gurtu and Mr. Ian Wall, the UIAA Observer and other Instructors from the various mountaineering institutes. Apart from practical/ technical training on the glacier, five separate peaks above 6,100 meters were climbed by five teams as Self-contained expeditions beyond base camp.

The Sport Climbing activities are also under progress as planned by the Sport Climbing Committee. So far,

- ▶ The Belayers Course,
- ▶ Judges & Route Setters Course
- ▶ Advance Level Route Setters Course were conducted in March, May and August 2015 respectively.

Zonal Sport Climbing Championships are planned during September/ October 2015 at New Delhi, Jamshedpur, Agartala, Pune, Bangalore and Wellington. 21st National Sport Climbing Championship will be conducted in November end at IMF. IMF Junior team representing IMF in the Asian Youth Championship is being planned to send to Malaysia in December.

IMF, in association with Girivihar Club, Mumbai will be hosting International Federation of Sport Climbing (IFSC) World Cup (Bouldering) in May 2016 at Navi Mumbai. This will be the first ever IFSC event to be held in India.

Further, taking the call of Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi of "Swachh Bharat" a step ahead, IMF and ONGC have joined together to strengthen the "IMF Clean Himalaya" campaign that will be focused on cleaning the ecologically fragile Himalayan region. ONGC has sanctioned Rs. 16 lakhs to organise four cleaning expeditions one each in Ladakh, Himachal, Garhwal and Kumaun.

Various Ministries/ Institutions for promotion of adventure activities are increasingly engaging IMF as knowledge partner. Presently some of the proposals/ schemes under consideration of the Ministries/ Institutions are as follows:

**Skill Development Ministry, Government of India:** IMF is being designated as Assessment Body to certify the adventure Tourism based courses/ training to enhance job skills of the youth leading to self-employment/ employment generation in the Himalayan Region.

**Ministry of Tourism, Government of India:** IMF is jointly working on a capacity building program for adventure based service providers. Tourism Ministry has approved in principal to train/ facilitate 1,400 youth under this programme. (1,000 youth will be from Himalayan states and 400 from the North Eastern region).

**National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA):** IMF is working jointly with the NDMA to establish a process to both sensitize and train First Responders at community level in case of a natural disaster in mountain setting.

**Department of Personnel & Training, Ministry of Personnel (DoPT):** IMF is assisting DoPT, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions in formulating the Scheme for promotion of adventure sports for the Central Government Employees in which 75 percent of the expenses will be borne by the DoPT along with provision of special casual leave.

**J&K Government:** Chief Minister J&K had invited a delegation from IMF to discuss and facilitate the promotion of adventure tourism in the state. To start with, a joint expedition has been launched to peak Kolhoi (5425 m). The state government has

approved in principal to host a sport-climbing event at Srinagar, organise few more joint mountaineering and trekking expeditions in 2016.

**Odisha Government:** The State Govt. of Odisha has joined hands with IMF through East Zone and Chairman IMF Sport Climbing Committee to launch an expedition of youth to a Himalayan peak above 6,000m. The state government is also exploring the possibilities of setting up a sport climbing wall.

**Chhattisgarh Government:** IMF is facilitating the State Government to set up a sport climbing wall at Raipur and also help in planning and structuring adventure based activities for the youth.

**Foundation Course in Adventure Sports:** Based on the IMF Everest (1965) Golden Jubilee function at Khalsa College, the College has proposed to introduce 'Foundation Course in Adventure Sports' in collaboration with IMF.

**Opening up of all peaks falling in open areas for foreign expeditions:** In this regard, a proposal for 266 peaks to be included in the open area is under process with Ministries of Defence & Home Affairs.

### 110th Anniversary Celebrations the Japanese Alpine Club

The Japanese Alpine Club celebrated the 110th Anniversary on December 5, 2015, in Keio Plaza Hotel, Tokyo. Some 600 persons of JAC members and guests gathered. To the Club's great honour, the Crown Prince of Japan attended to the ceremony. The whole events were programmed as follows.

1. Three presentations before the ceremony and dinner party
  - i. JAC student expedition to Nepal Himalaya, 2015 – the first ascents of Dzanye II 6313m and Lhonak Peak 6070m in eastern Nepal close to the China/Tibet –Nepal border.
  - ii. Kazuya Hiraide's "Climbs in greater ranges of the world and photographing by new concept". Hiraide is one of the most distinguished extreme climbers in Japan. He was awarded the 17th Piolets d'Or 2009 for the first ascent of Kamet 7756m southeast face of Garhwal Himalaya in 2008.
  - iii. Tom Nakamura's memorial lecture "Forbidden South Tibet – Blue Sky Expedition 2014"
2. Celebrations Ceremony
  - i. JAC President Mr. Ohtsuka's address
  - ii. Main guest, Mr. Tanigaki's address: "Day of Mountains" will be effect as National Holiday, August 2016 onward
  - iii. Award of the 17th Prince Chichibu Memorial Mountaineering Prize to Kazuya Hiraide.

### 3. Dinner Party

- i. Opening of Japanese Sake barrel for starting dinner
- ii. Exchange of 28 JAC local sections
- iii. In the dinner party JAC Tokai's comprehensive work "Indian Himalaya" was introduced.
- iv. As another topic, it was officially announced that in collaboration with the Nepal Mountaineering Association the JAC will hold the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the first ascent of Mt. Manaslu in late April/early May 2016 in Kathmandu.

As reported by Mr. Tamotsu (Tom) Nakamura – The Himalayan Club Honorary Member

## Art of Freedom

A salute to Polish Climbers – a wonderful film about Polish Climber

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZ\\_wBf2t-\\_0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yZ_wBf2t-_0)

## Making a Museum Out of a Mountain - The New York Times

In picture-perfect South Tyrol on the Austrian border of Italy, the legendary mountaineer Reinhold Messner has created six eccentric museums devoted to his lifelong passion. Naturally, to get to each one is a hike.

Read more [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/12/t-magazine/austria-museums-mountains.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/12/t-magazine/austria-museums-mountains.html?_r=0)

## Health Care in the Himalayas - The New Yorker

Medical Mountaineers

Delivering basic care to the remote Himalayas - By Rebecca Soinit

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/12/21/medical-mountaineers>

This is a lovely article about Joan Halifex and how she is making health care reach the remotest villages of Nepal.



## Obituaries

### Dennis Davis

An extract from a tribute written by Jim Gregson for the Karabiner Mountaineering Club

From 1946 onwards, Dennis had amassed a huge range of experience in the UK and the European Alps, but he also had the drive and ambition that allowed him to make his mark in the Greater Ranges. He had tried to get a place on the expedition which made the first ascent of Kangchenjunga but this was not to be. Instead, Dennis went in the same year, 1955, to the Rolwaling Himal where in a single lengthy trip his expedition team made first ascents of no less than 19 peaks of 20,000 feet altitude. In 1957 he went back to altitude in Nepal on expedition to Annapurna IV with Charles Evans and then to Distaghil Sar.

A few years later, Dennis was the mainstay of the 1961 expedition which was to make the first ascent of Nuptse, the close neighbour of Everest. Dennis and Tashi Sherpa reached the summit on 16 May, paving the way for repeat ascents a day later by others in the team.

Through the 1960s and 1970s Dennis continued to climb regularly, and at high standard in the Alps, where with regular partner Ray Colledge he would blitz one north face or another.

He climbed a lot and frequently with Nat Allen, another of our fine presidents, making many first ascents in the development of rock climbing in North Pembroke. For many years he would show up to take part in the Club Fell Race, where, fiercely competitive, he would strive to win the handicap class to get his name onto Shelagh Manning's splendid trophy. To his chagrin this ambition was never fulfilled (maybe the handicappers were never lenient enough?) but Dennis did take it seriously. One year in the 1970s the race was based at High Moss in the Duddon Valley. On the Saturday, Dennis and I went to climb on Wallowbarrow Crag where we did a few good routes together until Dennis suddenly announced "That's enough, now, Jim. I'm off to recce the possible course for tomorrow's race" and off he went for some hours. He didn't win.

Dennis, along with Dennis Gray, was generous in helping towards my election into the Alpine Club in 1978, and in later years took a keen interest in my Greenland expedition ventures, supporting grant applications and the like - networking, it's called nowadays. When he turned 70, Dennis made a return trip to the Himalaya in 1996 where he had a joyous reunion with Rita, one of his oldest Sherpa companions from the 1950s. Although Dennis's companions faltered, he himself did get to the top of a peak of over 19,000 feet, not bad going for a pensioner.

Dennis kept going with his rock climbing to a good age, even after being seduced for a while by the game of golf - although Nat Allen always ribbed him as a "hacker" - but increasing arthritis began to take its toll. Unfortunately, osteoporosis also began to

make itself felt and Dennis, never a tall man, began to lose height. At an Alpine Club Dinner, I was in conversation with Dennis and later another AC friend asked me “Who was that person I saw you talking with?” “Dennis Davis, my old pal”. A blank look then “Who’s he?” “First ascent of Nuptse in 1961”. “What, that little old bloke?” The sort of remark that in 1961 might have got you a punch on the nose!

*Jim Gregson February 2015*

## Terence Goodfellow

Glyn Hughes writes: I am sorry to have to tell members of the death of our member Terence Goodfellow. Terence had been an AC member since 1962, introduced to the Club by his father Basil Goodfellow, an AC Hon Secretary, who also started Terence on his alpine career. Terence was a President of the Cambridge University Mountaineering Club, and while at university was member of an expedition to Baffin Island.

In 1968 he was a member of a team who climbed Miangul Sar in Swat Kohistan. We believed this to be a first ascent, but later discovered we had been pipped to the post by an Austrian party who climbed it from the opposite side. At least ours was a new route. Terence was a regular attender at AC lectures until quite recently when his mobility became restricted.

*From The Alpine Club News*

## Office bearers of the Himalayan Club for the year 2014

### OFFICERS

<b>President</b>	Tanil Kilachand
<b>Vice President</b>	Motup Chewang Divyesh Muni Dr. Rupamanjari Biswas
<b>Hon. Treasurer</b>	Deepak Bhimani
<b>Hon. Secretary</b>	Nandini Purandare

### Members of the Committee

Shailesh Mahadevia	Dr. Raghunath Godbole
Rishad Naoroji	Rajesh Gadgil
Debabrata Mukherji	Dr. Ravi Mariwala
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