



201. The 2011 Slovenian route *Dreamers of Golden Caves* on K7 West, showing bivouac sites. (Dick Isherwood)

ously unclimbed pillar, **Fida Brakk** (c5350m), which they named the *Jenga Spur* (V+, 5.11R, A0). The Charakusa valley continues to be a hot area for hard Alpine-style rock and mixed climbing.

In August a four-man Russian team established a new route on the north-west face of the **Trango Tower** (6251m). *No Fear* (VII 6B+ A3, 1120m), put up by Dmitry Golovchenko, Sergey Nilov, Viktor Volodin and Alexander Yurkin, is the first largely independent route established on the Trango Tower in more than a decade. They used three portaledge camps and much of the climbing was pegging.

A Russian/Ukrainian ladies team of Marina Kopteva, Galina Chibitok and Anna Yasinskaya spent 38 days establishing a new route on the north-west face of **Great Trango Tower** (6238m), *Parallelniy Mir* (VI+ 6b A3). They used nine camps on their route, which is at least the fourth line on this mile-high granite face.

HARISH KAPADIA

India 2010

I am grateful to the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, Lindsay Griffin, Rajesh Gadgil and several individual contributors, as mentioned, for information and reports.

If you'll pardon the cliché, whenever God closes a door he opens a window. This adage truly applied to the Indian Himalaya in 2010. There were not many expeditions to high peaks, perhaps reflecting higher peak fees and above all bureaucratic hindrance. However, there was much activity around small peaks, new regions and smaller teams. This may be an indicator for the future, as these expeditions are cost effective. Many did not mind meeting serious challenges below the height of 5500m, as peak fees are payable above this height. There were 40 foreign expeditions to India – a steep drop from the normal figure of around 65. Indian expeditions were 63, but unfortunately many were either to normal peaks or washed out due to bad weather. A flash flood hit the lower areas of Ladakh near Leh and elsewhere in remote valleys in early August. Rivers of mud destroyed houses, roads and fields. Aid from the army and government agencies poured in but it is never sufficient. Various organisations, including the Himalayan Club, raised funds to help.

Two new books were published in India. *The Siachen Glacier – The Battle of Roses* by Harish Kapadia covers the history of the glacier that has been the scene of conflict for the last 26 years. The history of the glacier, based on the author's several visits to trek and climb, is covered. *Himalayan Wonderland*, an earlier publication on Lahaul and Spiti by Dr M. S. Gill, was thoroughly revised and re-published with several additional maps and pictures.

The following were the major expeditions to the Indian Himalaya in 2010.

UTTARAKHAND

Arwa Tower (6352m)

Expedition: Dutch; leader, Sebastiaan Van der Smeede. The team approached the mountain from Ghastoli and entered the Arwa valley. They established base camp at around 4700m and placed two more high camps at 5350m and 5775m. They attempted the north-west buttress. Ice and snow on rock repulsed both the attempts made during the end of May and first week of June. They reached around 6000m.

Vasuki Parvat (6792m)

Expedition: British-New Zealand; leader, Malcolm Bass. This peak

located by the Chaturangi glacier is so named due to its shape as a serpent hood of a mythological figure, Vasuki. The alpine style ascent by the four-member British-New Zealand team of the unclimbed west face, traverse of the main summit and descent from the north-west ridge was a notable achievement. After establishing their base camp near the junction of Chaturangi and Vasuki Bamak glaciers at 4820m, they started their attempt on 3 October. During a continuous push, bivouacs were placed at 5400m, 5700m, 5900m, 6000m, 6200m, 6500m and 6700m on the west face. Malcolm Bass with Paul Figg reached the summit on 12 October. After traversing the summit ridge, they descended the NW ridge after a bivouac at 6250m and reached base camp on 13 October (see *AJ115* 18-30).

Kamet (7756m)

Expedition: German/Austrian/Swiss/French; leader, Herbert Wolf. This international team established their base camp at Vasudhara Tal and followed the traditional route to the summit via the Purbi Kamet glacier and Meade's col. Four high camps were established and the attempt took place from the summit camp at an altitude of 7080m. On 28 September the leader, with Oliver Amann, Nicolas Touboul, Bernd Mayer and Roland Brand, reached the summit.

Ekdant (6100m)

Expedition: Portuguese; leader, Daniela E.N. Teixeira. This two-member team from Portugal did not attempt Chaukhamba III as originally planned. Instead, they made two ascents in the area of Satopanth Tal. The leader with Paulo Roxo made the first ascent of the north spur of Ekdant (6100m) on 21 May and an Unnamed Peak (5115m) on 2 June. They have proposed to name this peak 'Kartik'. They also attempted Parvati Parvat but bad snow conditions foiled their plan.

Nithal Thaur (6236m)

Expedition: Slovenian; leader, Urban Golob. The team approached via Munsiyari, Lilam, Bugdiyar, Rilkot and Milam to Nithal Thaur (base camp) at 4200m. They followed the Milam glacier and established two high camps. Loose rocks and séracs on the south ridge of Hardeol stopped their attempt at an altitude of 5800m. They changed their objective and on 10 October, in an alpine style ascent, Boris Lorencic, Karel Završnik and Matija Jost reached the summit of Nithal Thaur (6236m) by the south-west and west ridge.

Trisuli (7074m)

Expedition: Swiss-German; leader, Walter Josef Pfeifhofer; September-October 2010. Because of heavy rainfall and obstructed route, the team reached the base camp at Nithal Thaur very late in the season. While on the glacier at 4700m, mountain guide Michael Nellen stepped into a crevasse and dislocated his knee. Two high camps were established and the team reached 5700m before retreating due to lack of time.

Bhagirathi III (6454m)

Expedition: French; leader, Christophe Moulin with seven others. Two routes were simultaneously climbed on Bhagirathi III by this French team.



202. Ranglana (5554m) from the lower Obra valley. (Harish Kapadia)

On 23 September, Bletton Antoine, Gentet Frederic and Messina Dimitri reached the summit via the east ridge, which is the normal route up this peak. On 26 September, all team members reached the summit by a new route on the west face. They established one high camp at 5500m on each route.

Trisul (7120m)

Expedition: British; leader, Simon Hall; September-October. Approaching from the west, the team established three high camps on the mountain and placed the top camp at 6400m. Unfortunately, this remained their high point.

Nanda Ghunti (6390m)

Expedition: Indian; leader, Shyamal Sarkar. This large team attempted this peak named after the 'Veil of Nanda Devi'. On 13 August, Sukumar Roy and Dilip Banerjee reached the summit following the traditional route.

Nanda Khat (6611m)

Expedition: Indian Mountaineering Foundation; leader, Dr Anil Gurtoo. Nanda Khat is an oft-attempted mountain in Kumaun. The team followed the traditional route through Song, Dwali and Phurkia and established base camp at 4482m. They climbed via a new route on the north-east spur to the north summit to reach the main summit after establishing two high camps (5352m and 5325m). Dhruv Joshi, Tapka Norbu, Chetan Pandey and Bharat Bhushan reached the main summit on 22 June. No high altitude supporters were employed.

Ranglana and the Obra valley

Boris Korzh, Philip Leadbeater, Kunal Masania, Andrew McLellan and Jonathan Phillips, all from Imperial College, London, made three first ascents in the Obra valley, west of the Bandarpunch-Swargarohini group

in far western Garhwal. They were only the third group to climb in this area. The middle part of the Obra is dominated by Ranglana (5554m), which has been the main objective of several previous climbing teams. British climbers Gerry and Louise Wilson, with Harish Kapadia and seven friends were here in 2006, but did not attempt Ranglana due to poor conditions. Vinay Hegde, a leading Mumbai mountaineer, later made multiple attempts on Ranglana with a young team but poor conditions beat them back. In the same area in 2008, Derek Buckle, Toto Gronlund, Martin Scott and Bill Thurston were unsuccessful on the north-west ridge of Pt 5760m, but instead climbed Pt 5165m north of base camp, which they christened Lammergeyer Peak.

The Imperial College team battled slush in the upper valley to establish a high camp at 4900m, from where they made the first ascent of Pt 5480m via the south-west ridge (500m, AD-). Five members then climbed the valley's highest peak, Pt 5877m, thought to be known locally as 'Dauru', via the north-west ridge (700m, AD). Finally, the team climbed Ranglana (5554m). The five placed a high camp just below a col on the SW ridge and then next day crossed the pass. From here they descended slightly towards the Maninda valley before traversing to Ranglana's south ridge and following it to the summit (900m, D-).

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Ascents in Jiwa Nala (Kullu)

Five members of the Alpine Club made a successful exploratory expedition to the Indian Himalaya, where they climbed four previously virgin peaks. Derek Buckle, Michael Cocker, Drew Cook, John Hudson and Laura Millichamp visited the Jiwa Nala in the protected region of the Great Himalayan National Park. Located in Himachal Pradesh, the Jiwa drains west towards the Beas river, south of the famous tourist resort of Manali. It lies in the Banjar region, approximately 70km ESE of Kullu. The area, as far as is known, had not previously been visited by mountaineers.

While shepherds had occasionally grazed flocks in the past, the valley can only be accessed via two difficult passes and no permanent settlement has ever been established. Peaks at the valley head rise to 5445m. From a high camp just below the glacial snout, Buckle, Cocker and Cook accessed an upper glacier via a steep snow couloir and then made the first ascent of Snow Leopard Peak (5365m), climbing a mixed route on the south face at AD.

The expedition also made first ascents of Tribulation Point (5125m) and Sentinel Peak (5140m), which lie in the crenulated cirque south of Snow Leopard. After establishing a different high camp, they also climbed Snow-cock Point (4890m), south of the main valley. (See *AJ115*, 31-38)

Singekang (6000m)

Expedition: Irish-British; leader, Alan Tees. This peak is located in the Singekang valley of Himachal Pradesh. This valley in Spiti was approached via Poh and Pomrang villages in southern Spiti. The team suffered poor



203. Raldang (5499m) seen from Kalpa. (Harish Kapadia)

snow conditions on Singekang and thus shifted their focus to a nearby **Unnamed Peak (5500m)**. They followed the west ridge and reached the summit on 12 November. The leader with Sandra Kennedy, Andrew Tees, George Carleton, Jeremy Windsor and Niall Boner reached the top.

Manirang (6593m)

Expedition: Howrah District Mountaineers and Trekkers, West Bengal; leader, Anal Das plus 11. Manirang is a high peak on the borders of Spiti and Kinnaur, first climbed by South African couple Dr and Mrs J. de V. Graaf in 1952 with the legendary Sherpa Pasang Dawa Lama and Tashi Sherpa. After reaching the base camp location at Spoana (4580m), the 2010 team established camp 1 at Sojana (5150m) and the summit camp at 5740m. Climbing via the south face, Molay Mukherjee, Kuntal Karar, Abhrajit Chatterjee with Norbu, Lakpa and Lopsang reached the summit on 3 August.

Ramjak (6318m)

Expedition: Punjab Police Adventure Sports Club; leader, HC Mohan Lal. Ramjak lies on the popular trek route from Manali, passing through the Shingo La to Zanskar. They followed the route taken by the earlier teams, ascending the eastern slopes to reach a col on the north ridge and turning south to climb the north ridge. On 14 July, the leader with Jagdev Raj Kodpha, Dina Nath and Aryan Singh reached the summit.

Raldang (5499m)

In July, Catalan Silvia Vidal attempted an El Capitan-sized granite wall on this peak in the Kinnaur region. A picture of the face had originally been posted on the big wall website of John Middendorf, who had offered

a hammer to anyone who could identify the location of this impressive formation. The most impressive view of this peak and face is obtained from Kalpa, directly to its west. As per the records, this pinnacle was climbed by Lt P. R. Oliver in 1931. It is clearly visible from many angles, especially from Kalpa, yet it was waiting to be climbed after almost 80 years.

Vidal established base camp at 3800m with porters. For seven days, she was never able to see the whole face due to cloud and heavy rain, and it took two days to find the foot of the wall. Access was via a complex and slippery ravine, in which she needed to fix ropes. After fixing the first three pitches of the face, Vidal set off for her 25-day solo stint. Two weeks into the route and above pitch 10 she reluctantly had to resort to drilling bat hooks through completely featureless sections. However, the crux A4 and A4+ sections were all natural.

Dome Peak (5650m), Point James (4965m), Miyar valley (Lahaul)

Expedition: Spanish; Anna Pfaff and Camilo Lopez. At the end of August, after a three-day trek, the pair established base camp on the grassy meadow below Castle Peak. They set off on 1 September for the south-east face of unnamed Peak 5650m on the north side of the Chhudong valley. After three-quarters height, instead of a traverse right to a gully, they opted for the headwall. Lopez led a steep face of 5.10, then Pfaff led two pitches of 5.10+, overcoming a loose section. Moderate 5.8 terrain led to the summit. They descended by 14 rappels through the night, along the way losing a rope, running out of slings, and almost losing their bivouac gear. They named the route *Lopez-Pfaff Direct* (IV 5.10+, 800m), and the previously virgin summit, Dome Peak. After this, the weather turned bad for 10 days. When it began to improve, Pfaff and Lopez tackled the nearby pyramid of 'Point James', which they believe to have been unclimbed. After climbing moderate terrain on an exciting ridge, they reached a headwall. An exposed 70m pitch up a 5.10 finger crack through solid rock led to a roof, bypassed by a rightward traverse that proved to be the crux of the route. An unprotected overhang above a hanging belay led to the summit and completed the 600m south-east ridge at III 5.10c.

Shiva Shankar West (5510m)

From mid-August to mid-September, Lynn Lacobini De Fazio, Massimo Marcheggiani, and Bruno Moretti, from the Italian Alpine Club, explored the lush Saichu valley, the first of the Pangi's sub-valleys right of the Chenab. After braving floods and washed-out roads to reach the Saichu valley, two days' trekking took them to the narrow entrance to the Tarundi valley, leading to the east side of Shiva. As horses were unable to go beyond this point, base camp (3535m), was established much lower than desirable.

Taking advantage of a good weather window, they continued north upvalley, camping at 4165m, 4600m and 5080m, the last 20m above a col overlooking Sural valley and dominated to the west by Peak 5860m. Visible to the south-west was the huge north-east face and magic east pillar of Shiva. On 1 September they started up the face immediately east of the

col, first climbing a 200m wall of crumbly shale in huge unstable blocks with difficulties up to UIAA V. Some of this was verglassed and they had to climb in crampons. Then they climbed a steep ice slope, followed by a snow shoulder that led to the 5510m rounded dome of Shiva Shankar West. This summit was first climbed in 2005 by Italian Diego Stefani, who named it 'Zero Point'. Continuing east would lead to the summit of Shiva Shankar (6011m) – the Horn of Shiva. All information suggests that the two Italian expeditions are the only ones to have climbed from the Tarundi valley.

Shiva (6142m)

Expedition: Russian; Andrey Muryshev with Evgeny Korol and Alexander Kornilov, and snowboarder Natalia Lapina; Aug-Sep 2010. Shiva was first climbed in 1988 by Junko Tabei. Climbing the north side of Shiva is problematic. It is divided into two parts by a central spur. In the lower section of the ENE face, huge hanging glaciers constantly discharge ice avalanches. Two fine ice couloirs rise almost to the summit but accessing them is difficult, and they were avalanching. The north face is only 50° and shorter, because it starts from a large and easily accessible ice terrace at c5000m. The group tried the central line starting at 5000m, but found the 45-50° snow wet, deep and unstable. When they returned after four days of bad weather, they found their equipment had been buried by a huge ice avalanche and the climbing was over.

Pangi Valley: mountaineering history; unclimbed objectives from the Saichu valley (Bruno Moretti).

Early history in the Pangi was made by Japanese Junko Tabei, who in 1988 made the first ascent of Shiva by the south-west face from the Parmar valley. In 2001 a Japanese team climbed Baihali Jot (6290m) by the north ridge. In 2002, an Indian expedition made the second ascent of Shiva, following the 1988 route. In 2004, Chris Bonington, Harish Kapadia, and friends trekked north up the Saichu as far as the confluence between Tarundi and Paphita valleys, then continued east up the latter to climb Jot Mund (5130m), Jambu Peak (5105m) and Pimu Peak (5480m) on the watershed with the Miyar valley. The following year Diego Stefani's expedition climbed Shiva Shankar West.

In 2007, Bonington returned, this time going up the Sural valley from the administrative capital, Killar. While he and Raj Kumar climbed Peak 5027m, the other three members of his British team, Rob Ferguson, Graham Little and Jim Lowther, attempted the north-west face of unclimbed Shiva Shankar (6011m), failing due to rotten rock. It was left to Japanese Kazuo Kozu, Hidetaka Lizuka and Reiko Maruyama, with three Indian porters, to make the first ascent of Shiva Shankar (aka Sersank Peak, because it dominates the Sersank pass to the north) the following year, via the same route attempted by the British trio.

Many challenges remain for future parties, the most notable being the eastern and northern aspects of Shiva [attempted by the Russians]. Equally

interesting are the unclimbed icy north-west faces of Menthosa (6443m), Baihali Jot (6290m) and its satellites, the latter with elegant ice faces above the Saichu valley. No less intriguing is the south face of Shiva Shankar, though it has a disturbing array of séracs that get the sun's rays most of the day. East of the Italian base camp lies the confusingly named Baheli Jot (5600m) – a miniature Everest. The south-west ridge would provide good acclimatisation and an interesting exploratory climb.

LADAKH AND EASTERN KARAKORAM

Gulmothungos Rocks

The valleys from Ringdom monastery to Padam contain several rock pinnacles, peaks and passes. Photographs of these were published in the *Himalayan Journal*, vol. 66. These small valleys offer good climbs without need for much arrangement or planning. One such group of high walls is near the check post at Gulmothungos. After crossing the river a small valley of same the name is approached and it offers a wide variety of rock climbs. A team of young American rock climbers, led by Rushad Nana-vatty spent an enjoyable three weeks in the summer of 2010 climbing challenging routes.

Barma Kangri (6515m)

Expedition: Japanese; leader: Masato Oki. Mari is located south-west of Pangong Tso in the Pangong range of the Ladakh Himalaya. Base camp was established at Kongma (4800m), a roadhead 23km from Chushul on the Tangtse road. The team made three high camps at 5400m, 6000m and 6100m. They did not climb Mari (6587m), their original objective, but instead climbed Barma Kangri (6515m). They ascended the south-east ridge and on 12 July, Rentaro Nishijima with Konchok Thinles and Pemba Sherpa reached the summit. On 17 July they were followed by Masato Oki with the same high altitude supporters.

Peak (5850m), and Peak (5995m) in Thanglasgo valley

Expedition: British-American-Finn; Christopher Horobin with Colin Bainbridge, Henry Latti (Finland), David Moseley, Matt Powell (USA) and others; July-August 2010. Lying north of Leh in the rain shadow of the Himalaya, this region has seen few parties operate outside the main trekking routes. Because of its proximity to the Pakistan border, the Indian military regard it as being particularly sensitive. The team had originally planned to attempt Telthop (6120m), but this was not possible due to difficult terrain where mules could not go. Hence they changed their plans for peaks above Thanglasgo. From Hundar, in the western Nubra valley, they accessed the main Thanglasgo valley. A three-day trek took them to Thanglasgo hamlet (c4600m) and the start of an unexplored valley to the east. A reconnaissance showed this approach to be long and difficult, with much moraine and a steep glacier. Later they caught sight of a peak at the head of the initial valley. It is marked on the map as 5850m and their Sherpas confirmed it as unclimbed.

From a base camp at Thanglasgo hamlet, they established a high camp



204. Gulmothungos Rocks, Ringdom valley. (Harish Kapadia)

in the valley leading to 5850m, and the day after crossed unstable moraine and a long glacier to reach the north-west face. This gave 300m of climbing up to 60° and led to the snowy, sometimes knife-edge, north-east ridge. Horobin, Andrea Bainbridge, Sarah Reynolds and Bob Shiels reached the rocky summit in deteriorating weather. The team then attempted the peak north of Shabib Chasser. The crest of the rocky south-east ridge gave climbing up to British Severe in standard, and after nine hours Reynolds, Shiels, and Horobin reached the summit, on which they recorded a GPS altitude of 5995m.

Lingsarmo (Pinnacle peak) (6995m)

Expedition: American-Canadian; Alison Criscitiello, Rebecca Haspel and Kate Harris. This three-woman team reached Nun base camp from Shafat village. After entering the Shafat glacier, they placed three high camps respectively at 5490m, 6130m, and 6270m ascending the Swiss face. They climbed to the col between Kun and Pinnacle Peak and on 16 August the leader and Haspel reached the summit.

Author's note: The historic first ascent of Pinnacle Peak was made in 1906 via the south-east ridge by American Fanny Bullock Workman with Savoye (her guide), and a porter. At the time it was the highest summit reached by a woman, and close to the human altitude record. The ascent is well recorded in the Workmans' 1909 book, *Peaks and Glaciers of Nun Kun*. The first editor of the *Himalayan Journal*, Kenneth Mason, created doubts about this ascent through his writings, although he never wrote explicitly that he doubted the ascent; 'Mrs. Bullock Workman claimed to have ascended

to 23,300', to the summit of a peak which she named Pinnacle Peak, and which she persistently referred to as the second highest peak of the group. Her heights and this statement were at variance with previously triangulated values.' This was published in *A note on the topography of the Nun Kun Massif in Ladakh*, and later repeated in Mason's scholarly work, *Abode of Snow*. The use of the word 'claimed' fuelled a certain controversy, though it is not clear whether Mason doubted Workman's ascent, or whether he, as a surveyor, was only discussing the height she gave to the peak.

Over the years, other teams have also climbed this summit, particularly in the 1980s, and referred to it as Pinnacle Peak. These ascents have been well recorded in various journals, and photos taken of the summit show it to be the same as that which appears on the front cover of the Workmans' book, confirming Fanny Bullock Workman's claim. Modern maps have renamed it Lingsarmo, and quote both Nun and Kun as 7135m, making Workman's peak the third highest in the group. It appears on the official list of new peaks opened for climbing in 2009.

Hagshu (6515m)

Expedition: French; Sept-Oct 2010. This 3-person team led by Mikael Dubois Bedin found bad conditions on the mountain, particularly falling rocks. They attempted the north-east ridge but could not reach very high.

Mamostong Kangri (7516m)

Expedition: The Himalayan Club, Kolkata section. Pradeep Chandra Sahoo with seven climbers set up base camp at about 4500m near Skyang-poche. The team occupied advanced base camp at about 4800m on 22 July. Camp 1 was set up at 5300m on the Mamostong glacier, below the Hope col (5885m). Camp 2 was established on the Thangman glacier (Kichik Kumdan glacier) at 5600m after crossing the col. The descent to the Thangman glacier was tricky, and the route was fixed with 200m of rope to safeguard ferrying across the col. The final camp was established at 6500m on the upper snowfield below the east ridge. 600m of rope was fixed in the gully leading to the upper snowfield. After two failed attempts, on the night of 6 August the snowfall stopped and the summit team left the top camp. Poor visibility and soft snow slowed their progress. They fixed 800m of rope on the steep summit ridge. After more than 10 hours, at 11.30am on 7 August, Debraj Dutta, accompanied by Phurba Sherpa, Pemba Sherpa and Dawa Sherpa, reached the summit.

Ibsti Kangri (6340m)

Expedition: Indian-American - The Himalayan Club; leaders, Divyesh Muni and Don Goodman. Peak 6340m, which the team named as Ibsti Kangri, is located in the Nimaling Topko area of Ladakh. In July, the team drove along the Leh-Manali road to reach Lato to approach the mountain crossing the Puja La (4930m). After crossing another pass (5354m) they camped on the Nimaling Topko. Base camp was established at 5200m and advanced base at 5620m. On 14 August, Muni, Goodman, Dave Adams and Dawa Sherpa began their ascent from Camp 1 at the base of the south-east face. The initial slope and an easy scramble brought them to the start

of the gully. It was a fairly steady climb of about 45-50° on firm snow, allowing them fairly quick un-roped progress. They fixed one rope to negotiate patches of steep ice on the final slope before they got to the east ridge of the summit. About 100m of ridge brought them to the summit, where they were surprised to find a small cairn towards the north ridge as there was no previous record of any ascent of the mountain.

Next, the team decided to attempt P. 6200m and P. 6265m. These twin peaks are marked as Dzo Jongo on some maps. Vineeta and Divyesh Muni established a high camp at 5800m while Don and Natalia Goodman, Adams, Dawa Sherpa and Phujung Bote ascended directly from ABC up the east ridge. They met up at about 6000m and summited together. The west summit of peak 6265m stretched a kilometre away, and Don Goodman, Adams and Divyesh Muni decided to attempt the traverse. The rocks were surprisingly solid allowing them to move un-roped. They reached the west summit after an hour and half of traverse. There are no previous records of any attempts of the west peak.

SIKKIM

Tingchenkhang (6010m)

Expedition: Chakram Hikers, Mumbai; leader, Rajesh Gadgil. In October 2009, Chakram Hikers had organised an expedition to Tingchenkhang (6010m) in West Sikkim. Two members, Mangesh Deshpande and Sekar Sadashivan reached the summit but were killed in an accident while descending (see *AJ 115*). Since winter was imminent, it was not possible at that time to retrieve the bodies. Thus another expedition was organised in September-October 2010 for this purpose. Six members, a liaison officer and seven climbing Sherpas reached base camp (4150m) at Devtaghar on the true left bank of the Prek Chu river on 27 September. Advanced base camp was set up at 4835m and Camp 1 at 5463m. On 5 October, five Sherpas, Rahul and the leader reached the high point. According to information from the 2009 expedition, they should have come across a steep but continuous slope that led towards the summit. Instead, there was a gaping bergschrund and a complex crevasse field. They reached 5915m, where, according to the Sherpas on the 2009 expedition, the bodies had been buried. The whole place was covered by a huge daunting bergschrund. The team searched inside the 'schrund on 5-6 October, but were unable to find any signs of the bodies.

Jopuno

In autumn 2009, Julie-Ann Clyma and Roger Payne were back in Western Sikkim, and together with Hugh Sheehan, made an attempt on Jopuno. On 7 November, they climbed the left side of the south-west face to gain the crest of the west ridge at the base of the black rock section. They climbed this until just below the snowy fore-summit, but by this time it was windy and cloudy, and they lacked the time or equipment to go further. More than half their descent was made in the dark.

W.W. Graham described climbing 'Jobonu' in 1883. In the 1884 *Alpine*



205. Nyegi Kangsang (6983m). (Harish Kapadia)

Journal he writes that it was, 'incomparably the hardest ascent we had in the Himalaya owing to the great steepness of the glacier work'. It is hard to imagine that Jopuno was climbed in 1883, but I would have thought that the west ridge would have been the line of choice in the pioneering days of alpinism. Nothing in his account fits the topography of Jopuno, and my current view is that he might have climbed the north-west glacier on Tinchengkang and mistaken this for Jopuno.

Lamalamani, Pk 5500m and Jopuno

Expedition: British-American; Paul Swienton with Geoff Cohen, Bob Hamilton, Dick Isherwood, Steve Kennedy, and Dave Ritchie. Inspired by Roger Payne and his accounts of the mountains of Sikkim, this team visited the Thangsing valley from 8-22 May. First, they attempted an obvious line on the west face of Lamalamani, going up to a col south of the final elegant snow arête of the north top. They left some gear in the boulders below the face and on the 11th began climbing the face in excellent weather. Overall, the route was c600m and AD+ and by following various degrees of difficulties, by noon all reached the summit.

On 14 May, Hamilton and Ritchie climbed an unnamed peak of 5500m between Jopuno and Lamalamani. The pair traversed steep snow and ice for a couple of rope lengths to reach a snow arête on the south face, followed this for a pitch, and then climbed two short pitches up mixed grooves to the summit block, which was gained by exposed moves. On the 18th, Kennedy, Hamilton, Cohen and Swienton left camp to repeat the west ridge of Jopuno. Above c5450m the ridge became icy and the section above was well covered in snow. They reached the foot of the looser black rock that forms the summit of the mountain. It appeared unlikely that the summit could be reached so they turned around.

Together with Tingchenkhang (6010m), Lamalamani and Jopuno have been designated 'Alpine Peaks' by the Sikkim authorities, and it is easy to arrange permits. All three offer good, medium-grade alpine ascents and could become classics of the Eastern Himalaya.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Looking for Kangto

Exploration in the east Kameng valley (Harish Kapadia)

The Himalayan range east of the high mountains of Bhutan starts getting lower as it enters Arunachal Pradesh. The Kangto range is the last high range, rising to 7042m, with its second peak of 6953m. The high peaks of Gorichen (6488m) lie to its west, while to the east of Kangto peaks are Chomo I (6878m), Chomo II (6710m) and Nyegi Kangsang (6983m). They stand along with many other peaks above 6000m and up to 6800m. The main peak, Kangto I, was climbed by a Japanese team in 1981 – approaching from the Tibetan Plateau in the north. However these peaks had never been approached from the south. Two expeditions to locate the approaches to its base camp in the south had failed due to difficulties of the terrain. In fact it was not known from where this peak can be climbed, where it could be approached from or the way to its base camp. There were no explorers to this valley during the last century or earlier. This group of peaks rises at the head of the Pachuk valley, in the East Kameng district of the Arunachal. It is on the McMahon Line, which is the international border. As there are no passes to Tibet from here, neither locals nor defence forces have ventured here. In the early part of the century, people used to trek to Tibet via the adjoining valley of Mago to buy salt. However, after the India-China war of 1962 this trail was not used. The approach is through thick forest, with scant trails and remote villages.

Harish Kapadia, Vijay Kothari, Atul Rawal and Geeta Kapadia travelled in the area from 18 October to 20 November. First, we travelled from Guwahati to Seppa (450m) and to Baming (1400m) by road. After four very tiring and hot days we reached Lada (1500m). A large Tourist Bungalow was being constructed. However, who would walk for three days in this hot valley to visit the bungalow was a question nobody could answer. Next day we woke by 4am to a clear sky and a magnificent view. From the ridge, on which Lada was located, we could observe the entire Kangto range. Such stunning and clear views are rare in these valleys as for about 10 months it remains cloudy, and for five of these months it pours. All the peaks: Gorichen, Kangto, Chomo, Nyegi Kangsang and a host of others were observed including a few in Tibet.

We trekked to the head of the valley, first to Sachong village attending the local church service with loud traditional singing. A priest, simply called 'Prembhai' – Brother of Love – with a long beard, was responsible for establishing such Catholic churches in the Kameng valley. Due to his efforts most villages were Christian and there was no large-scale drinking, no smoking and the people were god-fearing. Three days ahead was Bisal,



206. Kangto I (7042m) and Kangto II (6953m). (Harish Kapadia)

through similar terrain. Ahead of Bisal, on the left bank of the Pachuk river is Chalran Lake (4625m). The trail to the lake was over a sharp ridge and through a rarely used shikari trail. The main obstacle on the route was crossing the Pachuk river below Bisal where an old iron wire was hanging high between the two banks as the bridge was washed away. Shikaris would hang on the wire with an improvised harness and go across pulling themselves. It was scary and dangerous. So crossing the river to visit the lake was ruled out. We returned to Lada by a new route via the West Kameng valley crossing 'Lapung Pass' (2400m) (or Lupoi Pass as on the map), through a veritable paradise of forest, especially large areas of bamboo. We emerged at Khajlang (1500m) near a new dam, and returned via Nofra and Solari to reach Bomdila on the main road.

DICK ISHERWOOD

Nepal 2011

I would like to thank Elizabeth Hawley and the climbers named in this report for their help with information.

In October 2011, Park Young-Seok, arguably Korea's most accomplished high altitude mountaineer, died on the south face of **Annapurna** with two companions. He was making his second attempt on the prominent unclimbed line between the two pillars taken by the British and Japanese routes. The party reached around 6400m, climbing alpine style, and apparently died retreating in bad weather and stonefall. An extensive rescue effort failed to find their bodies. Park was the first Korean to climb all fourteen 8000m peaks. He has been widely quoted as saying, 'Mountaineers should be on the mountains... I will continue expeditions until death comes.' This line has some history – in 1992 Pierre Beghin and Jean-Christophe Lafaille reached 7400m, above the major difficulties, and were forced to descend by bad weather. Beghin died when an abseil anchor pulled out; Lafaille managed to descend alone despite an arm broken by rockfall. Ueli Steck made two attempts on it in 2007-8. As it is basically a depression in the face, it is not without objective danger.

There were 526 successful ascents of **Everest** this year, all in the spring and many on just 20/21 May in a good weather window, when it must have been awfully crowded up there. Apa Sherpa has now climbed Everest 21 times. The American guide Michael Horst climbed Everest and Lhotse in under 21 hours, thus becoming probably the first person to climb two 8000m peaks in a single day. He did use some oxygen and took a rest in his camp on the South Col midway. Babu Sunawar and Lakpa Tshering reached the summit of Everest by the standard southern route and descended to Syangboche airfield above Namche Bazaar by paraglider, circling over the summit and setting a world altitude record in the process. They subsequently kayaked down the Dudh Kosi and Ganges to Calcutta, naming their whole trip 'The Ultimate Descent, Summit to Sea'. A holy man from south-east Nepal, Bhakta Kumar Rai, who has a considerable past record of performing miracles, spent 32 hours on the summit, mostly praying for world peace. This is apparently another Everest record, but has not so far been accepted by the authorities in Nepal. Sixteen-year-old George Atkinson from Surbiton climbed Everest in the spring and became the youngest person to complete the Seven Summits. His record was however beaten later in the year by Californian Jordan Romero, who achieved the same feat at age 15. What will they do after they leave school?

The well-known Dutch mountaineer, Ronald Naar, died at around