

Multi Peak — Alpine Style

Doug Scott

Photographs 27, 31-39

During our ascent of Kangchenjunga in the Spring of 1979 I was smitten with the simple and unoriginal idea that the most satisfying way to climb big mountains in alpine style was first to acclimatize on smaller ones. Since then I have come to realize this is the only way to reach 8000m summits in alpine style and on the first attempt. On Kangchenjunga we were not able to book other peaks and were forced into yo-yoing, going up then down for rests until we gained enough momentum to reach the top. But the fundamental attraction of all great climbs is exploration of the unknown and the detraction of yo-yoing is that it lowers the psychological barrier to the problems ahead by nibbling away at them until there are none. It is also boring and dangerous. As with siege climbing the risk of exposing ourselves to avalanche, stonefall, collapsing cornices and storms is greater than when the climb is made on the first attempt. For all these reasons it is preferable to arrive at the foot of the climb fit and acclimatized, in good company and in total agreement as to where and how the climb should proceed.

With this in mind we climbed Kussum Kanguru (6369m) before climbing the N face of Nuptse (7879m) in Autumn, 1979 and this worked out perfectly. In Autumn, 1980 Georges Bettembourg, Roger Baxter-Jones and myself together with our friend Ariane Giobellina climbed four summits between 6100m and 6600m. We then climbed Kangchungtse (7640m) in five days before setting off on the 10km long SE ridge of Makalu (8475m) but here the multi-peak plan suffered a setback. After five days we were bivouacked beneath the headwall at 8000m. During a two day storm Georges developed a pain over his liver, probably a pulmonary embolism. It may have been brought on by his earlier towing of skis to the top of Kangchungtse and exacerbated by the heavy 25kg loads we were carrying at the start of Makalu. So we went into reverse, surviving terrible winds and the tent disintegrating before arriving back at Base Camp nine days after leaving it.

In the summer of 1982 this multi-peak approach worked out rather better for, after scrambling around Nyanang Ri (7071m) to 6700m and climbing Pungpa Ri (7445m), Alex MacIntyre, Roger Baxter-Jones and myself climbed the SW face of Shishapangma (8046m) in three days and arrived back at Base Camp two days later.

Having gained confidence in Tibet the plot thickened during our visit to the Karakoram in 1983 with a much larger party of ten climbers. Between us we climbed up to the Mustagh Pass (5422m), climbed Karpogang (5931m) and two unclimbed summits amongst the Baltoro Spires including a big wall climb on Lobsang Spire (5707m) by the South Pillar. Then, between us, we visited Windy Gap (6233m), Savoie Saddle (6666m) before six of us climbed Broad Peak (8047m). Greg Child and Peter Thexton during their bid met with tragedy and



27 *Broad Peak seen from W ridge of K2*

Photo: Doug Scott

Peter died of pulmonary oedema at 7600m. After three weeks of terrible weather Roger, Andy Parkin, Jean Afanassieff and myself attempted a new route on the S face of K2. After our fourth bivouac (at 7600m) Jean succumbed to cerebral oedema which meant that we had to descend, but after a rapid two day descent he recovered.

This expedition prompted a great deal of thought about our style of climbing big mountains. I came to the conclusion that the idea was still sound but with certain reservations based upon our own bad experiences and those of others. Curiously, during 1983 members of other expeditions contracted oedema and all in a variety of circumstances. On the other side of K2, the leader of the Spanish West Ridge Expedition whilst using oxygen (or with oxygen available) was struck down with cerebral oedema at 8200m. After an all-out rescue by his companions he recovered. Then one of the rescue party was carried on a stretcher from Base Camp to Askole with phlebitis, an oxygen lack related illness. That expedition had been in the field much longer than ourselves, employing slow siege climbing techniques and with oxygen. Robert Schauer's companion on Karun Kho (7350m) in Hunza had pulmonary oedema below 5500m on their Alpine Style attempt. Meanwhile a thousand miles away on Everest's W ridge John Roskelley and companions were attempting a lightweight although not purely alpine ascent from Tibet without oxygen. John, who has had problems with oedema before again succumbed to oedema, this time at 8200m. Fortunately he survived. In the autumn Dr. Oswald Oelz, the experienced Himalayan climber and physiologist survived oedema on Glacier Dome (7142m); he had to draw on his reserves after losing his way during the descent in bad weather.

It would seem that accidents and deaths associated with the lack of oxygen are a result not so much of the style in which one climbs but that the basic cause of mountain sickness and death is that some individuals are susceptible to it and it would occur even after lengthy acclimatization, whilst going alpine, lightweight or sieging (with or without oxygen).

Taking oxygen whilst not completely solving the situation does lessen the risks from oedema. So we are back to the old problem of, 'with or without oxygen', but not for the old reasons. In the 1920's some expedition members to Everest considered the use of oxygen 'unsportsmanlike' and in modern times Messner calls for 'Climb by fair means'. Now, going with oxygen means going 'heavy' requiring a large team, fixed ropes and always yo-yoing up and down the climb. What is at stake here, for those of us committed to alpine style climbing, is the freedom to move fast, and facing up to the uncertainties and commitment of this style of climbing. Do we have to give up that commitment, that freedom, because it is intrinsically unsafe? I think not; not on routes where there is no great, prolonged difficulty high on the mountain — at least not for everybody. It may be that the great Himalayan challenges such as the W face direct of Makalu, the NW face of K2, NW ridge of K2, S buttress of K2 (French attempt), S faces of Lhotse and Lhotse Shar, SW face direct of Everest will not be climbed alpine style because the risks of oedema are just too great. Perhaps the best we can do here is as the Yugoslavs did on Lhotse S face; i.e. to tackle these routes as efficiently as did Chris Bonington when he organized our climb up the SW face of Everest in 1975, but in future with less men and materials and without Sherpa support.

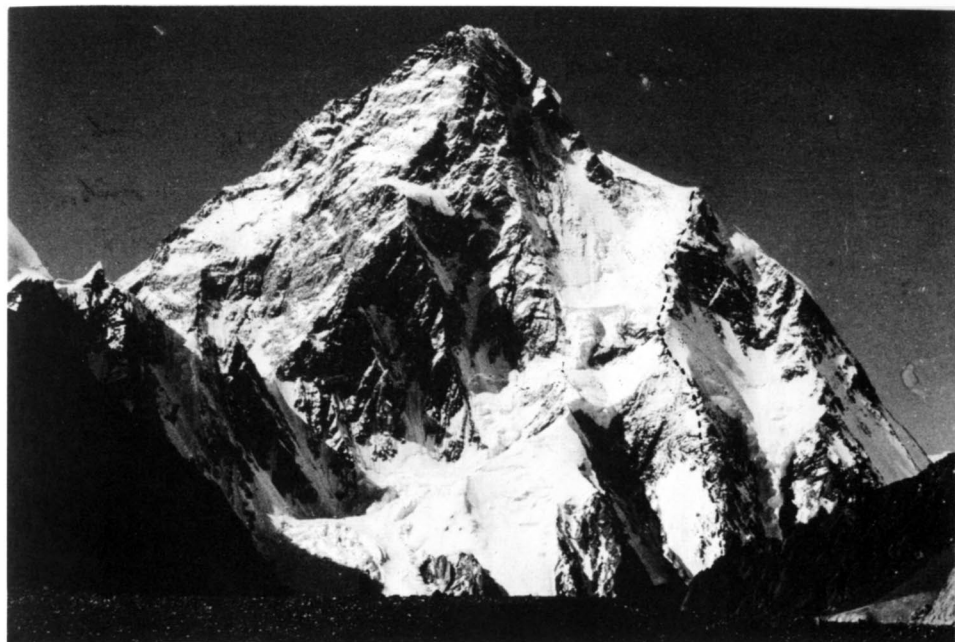


Photo: Doug Scott

31 *K2 S-face with the Abruzzi ridge on the right-hand skyline. Scott's new line follows the rib to the shoulder*

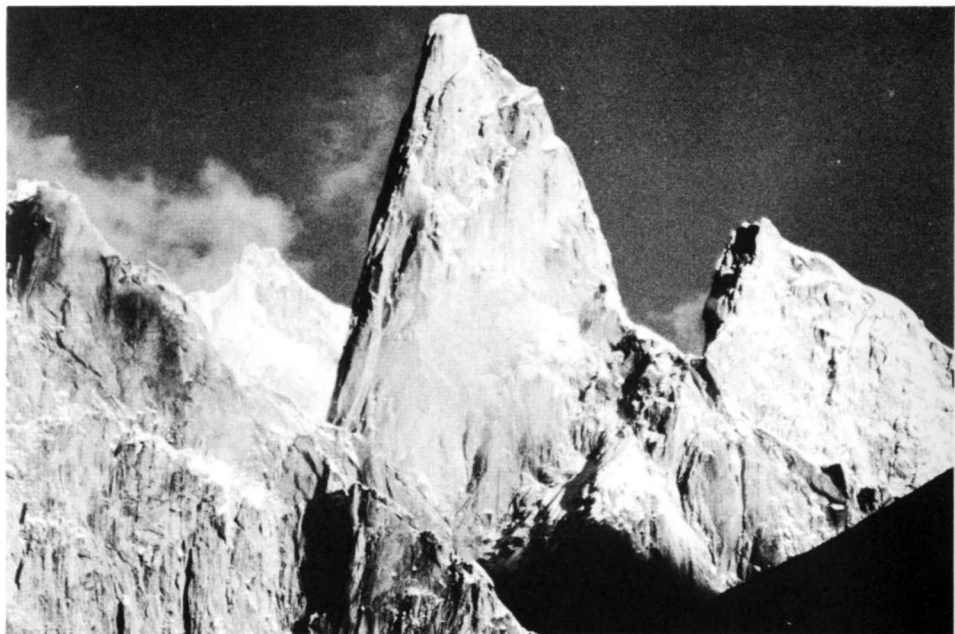


Photo: Doug Scott

32 *Lobsang Spire. The British-Australian route goes up the left-hand skyline to the snow terrace near the top R, up it, to finish R.*

Obviously those climbers who have had problems with oedema and related illnesses such as pleurisy, pneumonia, phlebitis must embark on 8000m summits with greater circumspection. They should retire if they have heavy colds, should avoid routes where the climb is obviously going to be strenuous high up, pace themselves in deep snow and at the end of a day's climbing when bivouac platforms have to be hacked out of the ice. They are obviously at greater risk because the unexpected is only to be expected on any Himalayan peak.

It is worth stressing the danger of over-exertion. I know from personal experience that at the end of a long day spending two or three hours digging out a snow cave or hacking a platform out for a bivvy tent can cause problems. I have on three occasions experienced nausea, dizziness and once double vision in my rush to find shelter and get my head down. The risks can be lessened by good organisation and preparation and by going with a team of four so that the work load can be spread more widely. With all this in mind I set about organizing a multi-peak, alpine style expedition for 1984.

Base Camp

Our objective was to climb Makalu, the world's fifth highest summit and the highest point in the Khumbakarna area of the Nepal Himalaya on the Tibetan border 19km SE of Everest, an isolated and beautiful region with a host of attractive, unclimbed peaks around. The walk-in is relatively difficult, and much more serious than to Everest Base Camp: most parties will take 12 days from the nearest airstrip at Tumlingtar, and 15 from the road at Hille. From the hot, dusty plains, the trail crosses the Arun via the rickety iron and wood bridge below Num, rises over the Shipton La (4200m) and traverses the precarious moraine slopes above the Barun before reaching the site of Base Camp at 4900m. The walk is good for acclimatization, though, and the Base Camp at an ideal height for recovery between climbs.

We had booked Chamlang (7319m) and Baruntse (7220m), and planned to climb on and around the unclimbed Peak 3 (6477m) which, by wide interpretation, came under our permit for the SE ridge of Makalu.

We were not so much a large expedition of twelve climbers, but were more like four expeditions running together — in fact our expedition might best be described as a 'camp' akin to Snell's field near Chamonix, with family and friends accompanying us at Base Camp. So to the climbers, Jean Afanassieff, Larry Bruce, Colin (Choe) Brookes, Richard Chaplin, Jim Fullalove, Ariane Giobellina, Brian Hall, Molly Higgins, Terry Mooney, Michael Scott, Stephen Sustand and myself, were added Jean's wife Michelle and daughter Jeanne (9), my wife Jan and daughters Martha (11) and Rosie (5), Clive and Sue Davis, Arthur and Rita Lees, and Nick Loening.

Brian, Steve, Terry and Choe set off immediately for the higher Makalu Base Camp (5400m) from where Basque and American Expeditions, both lightweight, were already established and were at work climbing the Ordinary Route and the W ridge (siege) respectively. The four climbed up to Point 6170m. Meanwhile the rest of the climbers walked over to the Lake beneath Peak 3. Michael and Arianne reached Martha's Col of 1981. Larry, Molly, Jim, Jean and myself climbed up to the SE summit (c. 6300m) of Peak 3 by the icy E ridge — a first ascent. The round



Photo: Doug Scott

33 L to R: Makalu, Lhotse and Everest 120km across from Kangchenjunga. Baruntse is the peak in shadow behind Pt. 6835 near the start of Makalu SE ridge. Cloud is crossing the unclimbed E ridge of Makalu which is wholly in Tibet

trip took about ten hours, the difficulties were never more than Scottish II and we climbed mostly unroped. Jim soloed the whole way up this, his first Himalayan Peak. We had not the time to traverse North to the main summit (6477m) (also unclimbed) although it looked feasible and interesting.

Baruntse

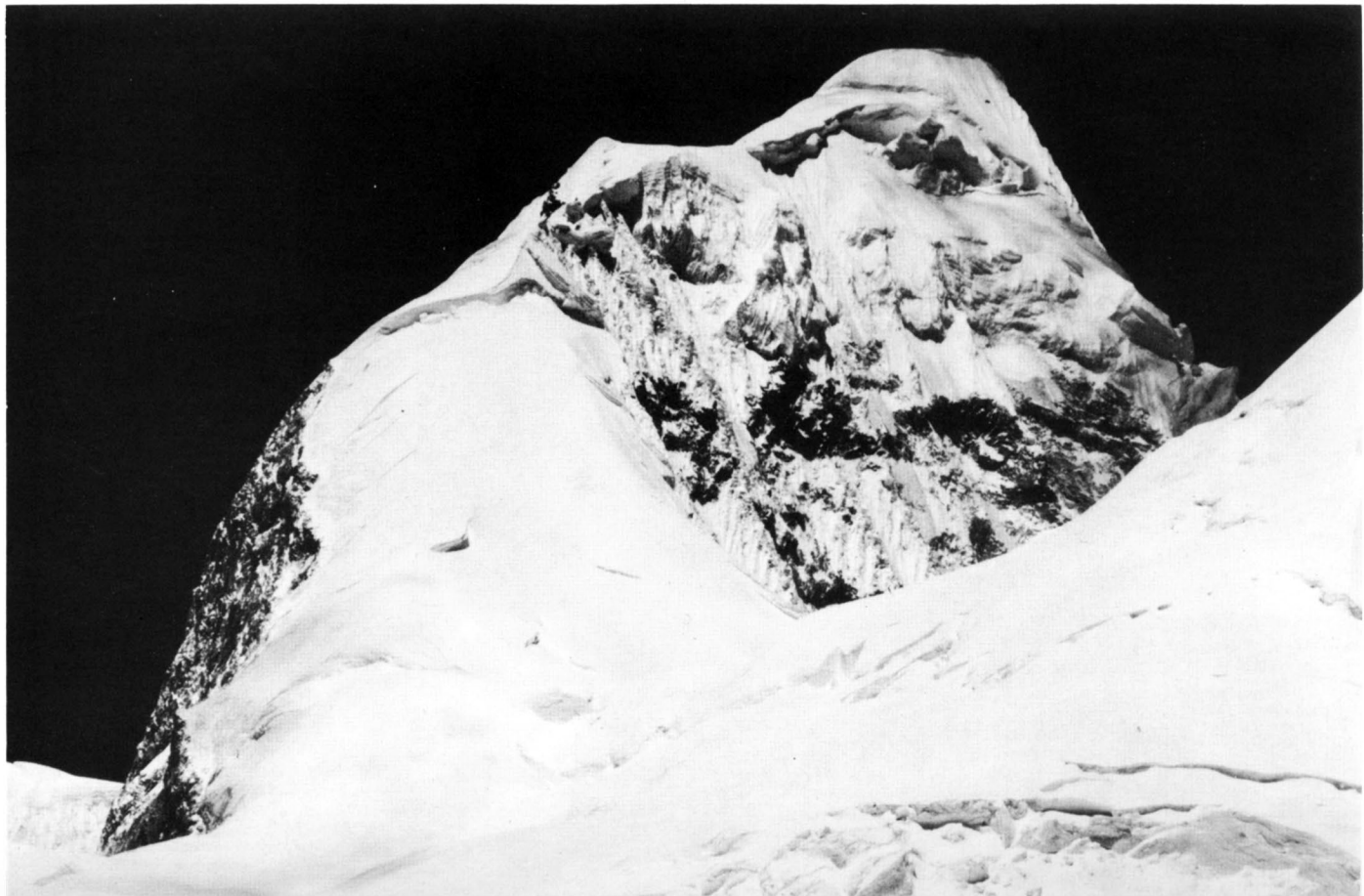
The SE ridge of Baruntse (7220m) had been climbed before on several occasions but it suited our purposes of easy acclimatization and training. Chamlang was to be a joint Nepalese/Foreign affair and the three Nepalese climbers, Ang Phurba, Saela Tamang and Pasang Sherpa needed a quick apprenticeship in alpine style climbing. We took an original route from Base Camp to the base of the SE ridge, crossing the grassy spur at Point 4915 before turning west and climbing snowed-up grass and scree terraces above and alongside the lower Barun icefall, along the route Reinhold Messner had pioneered in 1981. We established our first camp at 5400m and Camp II (Corner Camp) at 5600m on 1 May, still at the base of Peak 4, but where the Chamlang Glacier meets the Lower Barun Glacier. The next day we established Camp III (6100m) under the West Col and Camp IV at 6700m half way up the SE ridge by 3 May. The summit of Baruntse was reached on 4 May and we were back in Base Camp by the 6th.

This may sound pretty straightforward, but of the sixteen who set out, Michael returned immediately with stomach problems; Jim got lost before the first camp; Arianne went down to Base Camp with hepatitis accompanied by Nick from Camp II; Brian was struck down by laryngitis, so he and Choe, his partner, retired from Camp IV whilst Richard succumbed to headaches above Camp IV. Pasang (the only Sherpa with a Mountain School Certificate) had not the ability to climb a steep ice step above Richard's high point so the two of them went down, leaving Jean, Stephen, Terry, Saela, Ang Phurba and myself to reach the top amidst swirling cloud and falling snow. This was Saela's first summit and Terry achieved the distinction of being the first Irishman up any 7000m Himalayan peak! Larry and wife Molly climbed a 50° ice slope to the top of Point 6730, a southern outlier of Baruntse on 3 May from Camp III, completing a full circuit back to Base Camp via the main Barun Glacier. The rest of us returned the way we had come to deposit gear at Corner Camp for Chamlang.

Chamlang

The only previous ascent of the main summit of Chamlang had been made by the Japanese in 1962, using 1000m of fixed rope and ladders on the apparently difficult S ridge. From the main summit an impressive, exposed ridge stretches 8km ENE to the E summit (Pt 7290m). In all its length, the ridge only drops about 300m. In September 1981, Reinhold Messner, Pasang Sherpa, Ang Dorje and myself had reached the lowest part of the ridge after a fairly easy two day climb up the N face from the Chamlang Glacier, reaching a minor summit to the west at about 7010m before descending to the glacier the same day. That visit had revealed just how many good lines there were to be climbed on the extensive northern side, given good snow conditions.

On 12 May, Brian, Choe, Terry, Stephen, Jim, Saela and Pasang left Base



34 Baruntse SE ridge from the lower Barun glacier

Photo: Doug Scott

Camp, followed by Jean, Michael, Ang Phurba and myself a day later. Jim had a severe headache and retired to Base Camp. On the 14th the lead party left Corner Camp before dawn and climbed the steep ice below the virgin E summit of Chamlang. Four hours later our party followed, and by early afternoon we were all together beneath a 15m ice cliff which barred the way to the shoulder (Pt 6705), Pasang's inexperience having slowed the pace of the first party. Choe tackled the overhanging snow and ice in just a few minutes, and we all bivouacked about 100m higher on the lower lip of a bergschrund (6100m) after Jean and I had fixed our climbing ropes ready for the following day. Brian's party bivouacked the next night on the shoulder whilst Jean, Michael, Ang Phurba and I climbed the 'Tower' or rather the difficult ice just left of the rocks on the steep NE ridge leading up to the E summit. Michael and myself led two pitches each of Scottish Grade II/III. Our progress here was interrupted when Ang Phurba's crampons came adrift several times on the hard ice. Eventually we bivouacked about 100m below the E summit with a strong, cold, northerly wind blowing over the ridge. There were magnificent views of Makalu, Everest, Lhotse and the peaks of the Hunku silhouetted by the setting sun. Next morning we reached the E summit (7290m) at 9am and an hour later traversed the central summit (7235m). They were two of the highest unclimbed summits in Nepal. The main summit of Chamlang at the W end of this long, flat-topped mountain was still 5 km away and would have been a fine climb but we had to avoid drawing too heavily on our reserves before our attempt on Makalu.

But in descent we missed the easy line of our 1981 route and the alternative proved to be desperate. Just before dark we arrived at an impasse of steep, 70° rock and ice still 600m above the Chamlang Glacier. Jean was not amused, Ang Phurba was a worried man and Michael, with the innocence and energy of youth, relished the situation! We were forced to make an awkward bivouac between two seracs which hung out over the Chamlang Glacier.

On 20 May we traversed diagonally right down 120m of green ice and after a dozen abseils and down-climbing loose rock and crumbling ice to the glacier, we stumbled into Corner Camp helped along by the light of Choe's headtorch. We sat up late into the night quenching our raging thirst with cups of tea produced by Brian and Choe and listened to the harrowing story of their epic retreat from near the East Summit of Chamlang.

Terry had contracted snow blindness and was in great pain. Brian had been concussed in an accident at 6900m during an attempt on the summit. Choe and Stephen had had to evacuate them and supervise the Sherpas during the greater part of the descent.

One problem arising from the Government of Nepal regulations governing joint Nepalese/Foreign peaks that came to light is that the Nepalese members are rarely as familiar with the techniques of climbing and alpine style climbing as are the foreigners. Wherever there was steep terrain we had problems, and valuable time was wasted getting our Sherpas up. Also when accidents happen on steep ground our attention has still to be on our charges which detracts from the efficiency of the rescue. A further point on Baruntse presented itself when Pasang failed to climb a steep ice cliff. One or more of ourselves would have had to accompany him down. As it was Richard was able to fulfil this role as he had a



Photo: Doug Scott

35 Chamlang from SE ridge of Makalu. The ascent followed where the light meets the shade of the N face. The central summit is just lit by the sun. Beyond, is the lowest point of the ridge which Scott, Messner and Sherpas reached in 1981. Across the Chamlang glacier is 'Pyramid' Peak; in the foreground, Peak 4 and Pt. 6510

headache. Conceivably had he not retired we would have had to 'draw straws' and someone would have had to give up his chance for the summit — a miserable prospect after so much work and expense in getting so close. All in all joint Nepalese and Foreign expeditions to difficult mountains are dangerous, frustrating and also very expensive as three more members have to be given equipment, fed, allowed for in portage, and be paid.

Back at Base Camp, Terry recovered. Steve and Choe, who had done such a magnificent job in getting the team down in such difficult terrain, regained their strength and Brian sensibly decided not to do any more climbing at altitude with such an injury. He left for home with Clive, Sue, Larry and Molly, all of whom had to be back at work.

Makalu

On 24 May Jean, Steve and myself were ready to attempt the traverse of Makalu via its 10km SE ridge and down the NW ridge Original Route. In 1980 I had attempted the same route, convinced by then that one of the next developments in Himalayan climbing would be alpine style traverses of the major peaks with no support parties, fixed ropes, supply dumps or yo-yoing. We did not achieve our objectives then, nor later despite having booked Makalu in 1981 with Messner, and Lhotse Shar and Lhotse in 1983 which I had hoped to traverse with Alex MacIntyre and Georges Bettembourg. So I was pretty keen on traversing Makalu this time and if possible by a variant on the SE ridge.

Terry, Jim, Michael and Choe went up to the American/Basque Camp to attempt Makalu by the original route. My daughter Martha was keen to have a look beyond the confines of Base Camp, so she came with us to the first camp at about 6000m on the SE ridge, with Deata and Saela along to help her down the next day. Next day Martha, Deata and Saela accompanied us up and along the rock and ice ridge to a fine vantage point, with superb views of Everest, Lhotse, the SW face of Lhotse Shar and to the east, right across a sea of cloud to Kanchenjunga. Martha spotted the Col she had reached in 1981 on the Nepalese/Tibetan frontier. Although only eleven, she took all this in her stride and was somewhat disappointed that she had to return.

Unroped, Steve, Jean and myself climbed the ice arêtes and steep rocky ground leading up to Pt 6260, and onward traversing Pt 6285 to the saddle known as the South Col of Makalu where the ridge steepens appreciably. It was from here that Georges, Roger and I had staggered down the steep and complex glacier to the Barun Glacier during our descent in 1980. This spring we had been very surprised to see fixed rope stretching across bays in the corniced ridge, rope anchored to aluminium snow flukes and wooden stakes on the flanks of the ridge as well as on the flat crest. It must have been a labour of love that got those ropes in place for they were of very little, if any, practical value. We later heard that an American team had been there in 1983 but without further details. Stephen, being the morning person, was first away next day, breaking trail across the steepening col and on to the ridge beyond, a ridge we were to find unfortunately strewn with ropes running parallel, 8mm, 9mm and 11mm, from previous Japanese (1970), Spanish (1976) and Korean (1982) expeditions. At this point we realised that any variant would not be logical and would take us out of our way so



Photo: Doug Scott

36 *Makalu from N face of Chamlang East with the Chamlang glacier below. Beyond, the moraine marks its merger with the lower Barun glacier. 'Corner Camp' is at the base of the rocks of Peak 4 just where the ice-cliffs in the foreground obscure the rock*

we went the way of the ropes. We bivouacked on top of the mushroom where we were to have our last comfortable night's sleep.

The next day dawned clear and beautiful as the sun rose to the north east of Kangchenjunga, skimming its light across the cotton wool clouds which filled the intervening 110km and all the land to the south as far as we could see. Jean and I followed Steve's footprints at the bottom of holes two feet deep. The snow was so uninspiring that Jean was rapidly losing interest in the route. All day our climb steepened by a series of ice and snow steps. After lunch Steve and I led 150m of difficult steep rock and intervening snow gullies to the edge of the eastern cwm. At this point beneath the black gendarme the SE ridge curls round to the left. It was here that we left it by descending about 300m to the floor of the cwm. We all broke trail by turns during the afternoon, for a couple of kilometres or so to some seracs below the headwall, about 90m below our bivouac of 1980.

The eastern cwm of Makalu is the highest and most isolated hanging valley in the world. As Roger had said in 1980 — dropping down into it was like putting our heads into a noose. Whilst we nearly hung ourselves in 1980 I felt more confident this year; we were climbing faster, our loads were lighter, it seemed like nothing would stop us climbing the headwall to the summit and then down the easier NW ridge, a route we knew had already been climbed and descended unroped this year by two Basque climbers. But the knee deep snow slowed our pace to a crawl and we only gained 180m often climbing diagonally right. The act of carving out a platform took well over an hour, even though the snow was soft. Disaster after disaster struck during the night and the second day on the headwall was much the same as the first; 180m of deep snow.

It was here that I found a frozen body¹ sitting upright in the snow some 15m below the ridge. He was sitting amongst the rocks as if in an armchair in which he had nodded off to sleep, never to wake up.

Once on the summit ridge Jean and I set off up a snowy ramp to the foot of a 60m tower of steep rock. Jean turned back after 30m or so whilst I went a little further then also returned having decided that although this way to the summit was possible, we may as well go for the soft snow on the right side of the tower. We all met up at an eyrie of ledges and decided to bivouac the night, perhaps 90m below the top. By now Jean who had been carrying an extra load for filming seemed very tired and had been complaining of a ringing noise in his head. I had developed a sore throat during the day and since both Stephen and Jean had set out with fairly bad sore throats, there were now three of us barking at the tent fabric. Stephen and Jean produced 'miso' soup but I was unable to drink the chocolate which followed for by then I was coughing so much I vomited.

At the dawn of my 43rd birthday we dismantled the tent, packed our gear and took stock of our position. Only a few metres to go after so many but there was now cloud above and below us and we had been drained by three nights on the headwall. We tried one way, then another; then a third way seemed better. By now Jean was arguing for descending, pointing out that we only had half a cylinder of gas left, that the weather looked threatening and we were all tired. I felt that this was even more reason to go up and over for the easy descent of the French route. I turned to Stephen, but he was in neutral and not saying anything whilst his elders argued. By now Jean had shot off down 6m. I pleaded for two

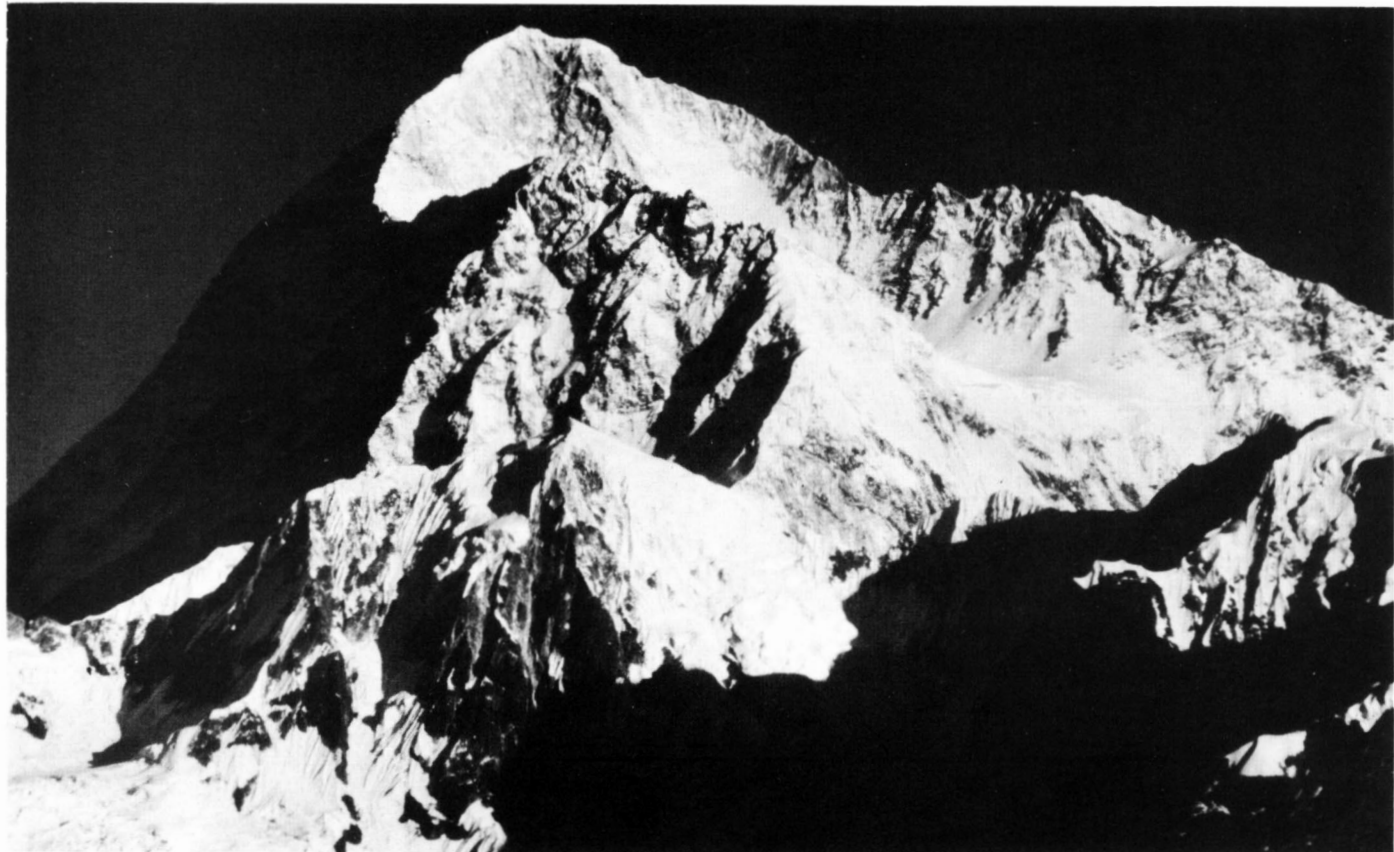


Photo: Doug Scott

37 *Makalu from SE (Shipton La). The unclimbed E ridge descends R from the summit. The entrance to the E cwm can be seen between the E and SE ridges. The upper part of the headwall can be seen above the SE summit (8010m). The lower SE ridge descends towards the camera to the S col and Pt. 6825 (foreground, below main summit)*

more hours climbing but with 'I go' he was gone. Stephen and I looked at each other, shrugged and followed. Jean leapt down the headwall at an incredible pace, his long legs in and out of the snow. One by one we passed the fifth bivouac site and continued down to the fourth where I caught up with him as he sat on his sack coughing. I sat on mine and did the same. Fifteen minutes later Stephen arrived badly shaken having been caught in an avalanche without either Jean or myself noticing.

During the afternoon we waded down the soft snow lying in the bed of the cwm. At the point where we had to traverse across and up the right side of the basin we stopped for the night pitching the tent on top of an ice cliff. The gas was all gone and there was only frozen snow to quench our raging thirsts. Jean and Stephen slept between coughing fits; I sat gulping on my desperately raw sore throat thinking of the turquoise pool amongst red rocks, still two days away at the foot of the South Col Glacier. I filled my water bottles with snow and put them next to my body to melt. I fell asleep as the wind drove pellets of ice and snow at the tent. We awoke to the sun.

The climb back 800m towards the shoulder was a nightmare of unremitting toil. Then with one last rope length I reached the crest of the ridge. Jean gathered up our other climbing rope which we had abandoned four days ago and I arranged the first abseil and threw both ropes down the steep rocks. With every metre of descent we recovered a little more; our worst fears gave way to relief and finally to elation. We found some frozen tinned fish on the Mushroom and then swarmed down the fixed ropes to the South Col. Jean was now in his element sliding down at breakneck speed only just in control. Finally he stopped after descending a Grade II gully on his backside and we camped our eighth night.

Next morning with a touch of *deja-vu*, Jean like Georges three years before, led us down through the complicated seracs to the red rock pool where we fell asleep for an hour, safe at last. Jean went on to Base Camp. For me and to a lesser extent Steve it was a case of stopping every few yards to rest. Martha came down the path to meet us and I leant on her shoulder and stumbled into Camp. There was Terry, and tears of relief came pouring out that we might have died up there but had made it back to live again among friends and family. Never had I to draw so heavily on my strength time after time. It left my energy levels depleted for quite a few weeks as if the life energy — the Chi Energy as they call it over the border — had been drained.

I was surprised how much my ambition to traverse Makalu put up a barrier between me and the man who I considered had thwarted that ambition. I felt afterwards that I had failed to convey fully to Jean my strategy for survival. I knew from first hand experience the dangers of reversing the route from the headwall and just how easy the other route had looked when I saw it from Kangchuntse in 1980. But then, as he said, I had not got him off Chamlang very easily, so he had lost confidence in my judgement, before we started. At altitude communication gets less and less as each of us becomes more and more locked into his own thoughts bent to the problem of personal survival, with the result that flexibility in the face of change becomes non-existent. Jean told me afterwards that we should have gone on for the summit instead of doing the last bivvy. We seem to assume that our own thoughts are everyone else's. At least I



38 *Third bivouac site (Mushroom) on Makalu's SE ridge*

Photo: Stephen Sustad

usually assume this. Looking back, we should have talked more about our expectations of this route. Maybe next time or the one after we will get it just right. (Jean, as I realised afterwards, had been much affected by the presence of the body.) But despite all of this we seem to have come back stronger than when we left and all in all this was a good expedition. No doubt there will be other occasions to take that extra step into the unknown which the traversing of a big mountain entails.

1. The body was that of Karel Schubert (Czech) who died in 1976 after becoming separated from Milan Krissak (Czech) and Jordi Camprudi (Spanish) during the descent after making the fifth ascent of Makalu.





Photo: Doug Scott

39 *Stephen Sustad (leading) and Jean Afanassieff nearing the top of the SE ridge of Makalu. Peak 3 (south) is just above Stephen and main Peak 3 above Jean. The Mushroom bivvi is down to the left*