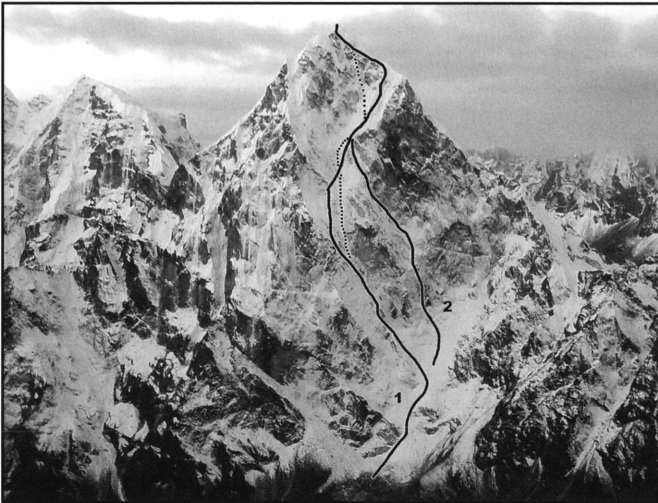


*Kyajo Ri (6,186m), rapid (non-calendar) winter ascent, and alternative approach.* In early December Dawa Steven, Nanga Dorje, and Pemba Tenzing inaugurated a new approach to the Kyajo Glacier, and made a rapid, quasi-winter ascent of Kyajo Ri's standard route on the southwest ridge. The normal approach is via Mende and the valley of Kyajo Drangka, but the three Sherpas began from Khumjung village, leaving at 8 a.m. on the 5th. Working first west, then north, they crossed the Gongla Danda at the Gongla La. They descended the far side into a hidden valley, skirting the steep rocky flanks of Khumbila on a faint but safe path. At one point it is necessary to descend a steep ice gully, or exposed rocks on the outside. (The team used the gully on the approach, but on their return climbed the rock. If using porters, this section would need to be fixed.) On the far side of the valley they slanted up loose scree on the right side of the headwall to enter a second, hidden valley, where they pitched camp north of a small lake. Waking at 3 a.m. on the 6th, they took just an hour to cross the headwall of the second valley and reach the Kyajo Glacier. From there they quickly gained the col at the foot of the southwest ridge of Kyajo Ri and climbed it unroped until ca 200m below the summit. They then fixed 180m of rope up a 50° slope of hard, blue ice above. When their rope ran out, they were fortunate to find a 70m rope, left by a previous expedition, that led to the summit. All three stood on top at noon, having made the ascent from Khumjung in just 28 hours. Normally, an acclimatized team would take around five days. They enjoyed sunny days and calm winds. Ice conditions were hard and solid, and the snow quite firm. This led to a very quick and safe climb of the mountain.

DAWA STEVEN and ANG TSHERING SHERPA, Nepal



North face of Cholatse seen from Lobuche East. (1) French Route (Badaroux-Batoux-Challamel-Mora-Robach, 1995). The dotted line shows the Korean variations during the first winter ascent (Park Jung-hun-Chai Kangsik, 2005). (2) 2010 Russian Route. To the left is Pk. 6,367m on the ridge north-west of Tawoche. Joel Kauffman

*Cholatse (6,440m) north face, calendar winter ascent, Russian Route.* Galya Cibitoke, Alexander Gukov, Sergei Kondrashkin, Viktor Koval, and Valery Shamalo from St. Petersburg arrived in Kathmandu at the end of February and from there reached the north side of Cholatse via a trek over the Chola Pass. Their goal was the large rock buttress right of the 1995 French Route. During the second week of March, five days into the first attempt, the very strong female alpinist, Cibitoke, lost consciousness. She had to be brought round by

artificial respiration and an injection of dexamethasone. The team retreated to base camp.

Despite Cibitoke recovering quickly, and eager for another attempt, her teammates felt it best for her to descend to lower altitudes, and Kondrashkin accompanied her. Later, they realized the probable cause of her sickness was carbon monoxide poisoning from a faulty Jet-Boil stove.

On March 14, after only one day's rest at base camp, Gukov, Koval, and Shamalo started back up the route but with a change of plan. The first foray had showed that the upper, partially overhanging pillar would need much aid, a portaledge, and capsule style. The team had not brought a ledge and wanted to climb in alpine style, so they followed a slanting line up left, bypassing the overhanging pillar to reach the upper section of the French Route. The initial pitches followed snow and ice runnels to a complex rock section, which the three crossed on aid. Above, the climbing was a mixture of free (with ice tools) and aid.

They made their first bivouac at the top of pitch 11, the second on pitch 14, third on pitch 18, fourth on pitch 20, fifth on pitch 23 (above which they joined the French Route), sixth on pitch 28, seventh on pitch 33, and on the eighth day, their 37th pitch took them to the summit. Most bivouacs were of the "sitting" variety, but the weather was generally stable throughout, with temperatures down to  $-20^{\circ}\text{C}$ . On a couple of days it snowed in the afternoon, causing spindrift avalanches. On those occasions they stopped early for the night. The Russians found no trace of previous passage until they joined the French Route, where they discovered a piton. Difficulties were Russian 6B, VI+ A2 80°, and the height of the route just over 1,600m (2,030m of climbing). They reached the summit at 2 p.m. on March 20, just within the calendar winter season.

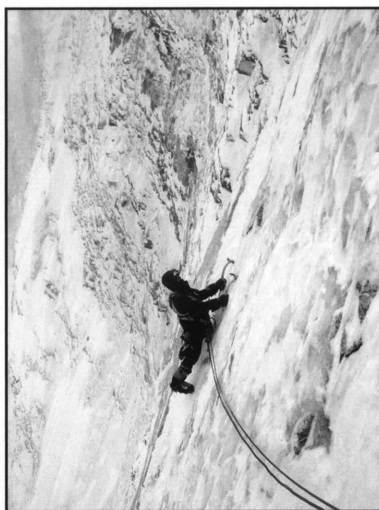
After spending the night on a snowfield, below and southwest of the summit, they descended the southwest ridge. This proved difficult, as they had only a vague idea of the line. They ended up on the southwest face and had to make a few rappels, another bivouac, and then a tricky descent of the lower icefall and glacier before they reached level ground and were able to take off their harnesses for the first time in 10 days. For the last two of these days they had nothing to eat, so the descent to Gokyo Valley proved harder than expected. They reached base camp on the 24th.

*From material provided by ANNA PIUNOVA, mountain.ru*

*Lobuje East (6,119m), southwest face, Night Terror.* On October 29, Jared Vilhauer and I started up what we believe to be a previously unclimbed ice line on the southwest face of Lobuje East. We'd spotted it while making day hikes toward the Cho La (pass). Ice in the back of a prominent weakness caught our attention.

We woke at midnight and were soon ascending a moraine that gave out onto scree-covered ice, which we climbed to gain recently revealed, glacier-polished bedrock. Jared drew the first pitch, which earned the nickname "sparky." After pounding in a Lost Arrow and a stopper, he locked off on a left tool torqued in a crack, and reached high with the right. The right tool raked and bounced off a ledge covered in a veneer of ice and loose rocks; at the same time his feet skated off the polish and showered me with sparks. This was the first M7 pitch and a great warm-up.

Above, glacial slopes rose at  $50\text{--}60^{\circ}$ . We climbed simultaneously up runnels, running out



Approximately 24 pitches up the Russian Route on Cholatse, before the junction with the French Route. Supplied by Anna Piunova, mountain.ru