



West face of Yala. (Bruce Normand)

establishing a hard mixed and dry-tooling scene in China, which by the end of winter 2014 had resulted in 14 new lines up to M11.

Several routes were also established in 2013 which went unreported in the previous edition. Next to the monolith of Potala Shan, the south-west face of Eagle Rock saw new routes from a team of Dong Jinyun, Wang Zhiming and Zhao Heng (650m, 5.11a), by Marcos Costa climbing solo (650m, 5.10+) and by Keita Kanehara and Kenji Onodera (Japan, 650m, 5.11). Elsewhere, Dave Anderson (USA) and Yi Szu-Ting (Taiwan), climbing with Li Yunching, established a 450m, 5.10- route on the southern ridge of Seerdengpu and, with Zheng Chaohui, made the first ascent of Dayantianwu (5240m) by a 600m route on the south face which they graded 5.10 R/X.

### Shaaxi, Qin Mountains

China's sages, hermits and holy men have long understood the value of steep mountains, although their wisdom does not seem to have been passed on to modern local governments and tourism authorities. However, the many granite peaks of Hua Shan, the western peak of the 'Five Great Mountains' which stand as major landmarks in Chinese history as much as geography, have recently been open to low-profile climbing activities. In July, China's most experienced hard new route artist, He Chuan, took up the challenge of the 600m south face of the South Peak (at 2154m also the highest), producing a hard-fought 20-pitch testpiece of wide cracks and chimneys (5.10+ R C2+) which he climbed with Zhu Xiaofei. Elsewhere in the range, Yang Fan and Ye Yun climbed an 18-pitch route on another granitic feature, Qiezi Feng (Aubergine Peak), finding long and varied cracks up to 5.12b.

RAJESH GADGIL

## Indian Himalaya 2013



Border pillars at Chaukan pass. (Harish Kapadia)

In 2013 there were 31 expeditions from foreign countries and 67 Indian expeditions to the Indian Himalaya. Though the majority of them aimed for the routinely climbed peaks, a few attempted new peaks or routes. Unfortunately, many pre-monsoon expeditions to Garhwal and Kumaun suffered due to catastrophic heavy rains and their after-effects. Floods in the upper reaches of the Kedarnath valley trapped more than 50,000 pilgrims, and it is reported that at least 15,000 pilgrims died. The area has not yet returned to normal.

A selection of expeditions to new areas, new peaks and routes are below.

### ARUNACHAL PRADESH

#### Chaukan Pass (2419m)

The Chaukan pass on the India-Burma border was reached by a team from Mumbai, led by Harish Kapadia. Trekking 157km along the muddy Miao-Vijaynagar road, they reached the Noa Dihing river. For several of the river crossings they had to construct small bridges and cut across thick forest. Finally a steep climb led them to the pass, which had not been



North face of Kuchela Dhura (6250m). (Dhruv Joshi)

visited by a civilian party for decades. During World War II a British party crossing this pass from Putao to Miao was trapped due to monsoon floods, and barely survived. The team also crossed into Burma from Pangsau pass and viewed the historic 'Lake of No Return'. (Article *HJ 69*)

## SIKKIM

### Tingchenkhang (6010m)

In May 2013, Manash Brooah led 15 members of the Assam Mountaineering Association of Guwahati on an attempt on Tingchenkhang. After establishing base camp near Lamuney, the team established one high camp on the western slopes of the mountain. On 14 May, the team made a summit attempt but had to stop at about 5580m as the ropes fixed had either been damaged or carried away by an avalanche. One more attempt was made on 15 May but again the summit proved elusive.

## UTTARAKHAND

### Trisul (7120 m)

An Indian army team approached this high mountain from the Raunthi glacier, under the leadership of Brigadier Ashok Abbey (president of the Himalayan Club). They climbed the west ridge and established three high camps. On 30 May 2013, the team of Naib Subedar Madan Singh, Hav

Matwar Singh, Lance Naik Min Bahadur Tamang, Rifleman Yashpal and Paratrooper Ashok Kumar left Camp 3 at 02.30. After crossing the col between Trisul I and II, they reached the summit at 09.20. The team also had planned to traverse all three summits of the Trisul massif but, due to unstable snow conditions, the traverse was called off. On 31 May, Nk Bishnu Bahadur developed major symptoms of high altitude sickness at Camp 3. Excellent team work resulted in a successful evacuation to base camp. On 3 June, another team comprised of Subedar Kunwar Singh, Capt Brijesh Kumar, Rifleman Pratap Singh and Rifleman Sunil Rai also reached the summit of Trisul I. (Article *HJ 69*)

### Kuchela Dhura (6250m)

In the post-monsoon season of 2013, an expedition to this unclimbed peak was sponsored by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation and led by Dhruv Joshi. After crossing Martoli village, base camp was established at 4173m on the right bank of Lwan gad. They placed two higher camps and the summit camp was at 6064m. On 6 September 2013, the leader, Vijay, Chitramohan and Wallambok reached the summit and achieved the first ascent of Kuchela Dhura. (Note *HJ 69*)

### Nanda Devi East (7434m)

In early May 2013, a team under the leadership of Anindya Mukherjee established base camp at Bidalgwar (4300m) and fixed ropes to Longstaff col. After establishing Camp 2 on the narrow south ridge at 6200m, the team attempted to reach the summit in semi-alpine style but had to abort the climb due to high winds and technical difficulties. (Note *HJ 69*)

### Manda II (6568m)

Shekhar Ghosh and 10 expedition members of Nilkantha Abhijatri Sangh, WB, attempted Manda II in May-June 2013. The team established base camp on 30 May on the right bank of Kedar Ganga river, opposite Kedar Kharak, at 4400m. They established three higher camps on the western side of the mountain. Their fixed ropes were exhausted after reaching 6120m and, deciding that to climb further without fixed ropes was risky, they called off the attempt on 9 June 2013. On 11 June one of the members, Biswajit Bose, suffered respiratory problems at base camp. The team evacuated him and took him to Gangotri on 13 June but at the local health centre he was declared dead.

### Mana (7274m)

In May 2013, Cyrus Shroff led an Indian expedition of four. The team established base camp (4120m) on the right bank of the confluence of Uttar and Dakkhni Nakthani gad on 18 May. The team entered the Uttar Nakthani glacier and established three high camps, fixing a few ropes on difficult portions. They first tried to reach Gupta khal but then shifted to a gully leading to the upper icefields. They established their highest camp



Chaukhamba col from Badrinath side. (Debabrata Mukherjee)

(Camp 2) at 5600m on 26 May. Unfortunately, the weather turned and gale force winds made movement dangerous and tricky. They abandoned the climb at 5900m.

#### **Chaukhamba IV (6854m)**

An American expedition led by James Ryrice Norton attempted Chaukhamba IV in September 2013. On 15 September, the team established base camp at Sundervan in the Gangotri glacier area, and attempted the mountain from the western/ south-western side. After ABC, they established Camp 1 at 5180m but had to call off the attempt because of heavy snowfall in the area.

#### **First Crossing of Chaukhamba col (6053m)**

In July 1912, CF Meade reached the col between Chaukhamba I and Januhut, hiking from a high camp on Bhagirath Kharak glacier. He did not cross the col. He stood there for a while, got a glimpse of the Gangotri glacier on the other side, and then returned the way he came. In May 2013, Debabrata Mukherjee and his team of four climbers and two high altitude supporters climbed up the Bhagirath Kharak glacier to the Chaukhamba col and descended to the Gangotri glacier, thus linking Badrinath with Gangotri. The team was awarded the Second Jagdish C Nanavati Award for Excellence in Mountaineering. (Article *HJ* 69)

## HIMACHAL PRADESH

### **Khhang Shiling (6360m)**

Cosmin Andron and some friends from Romania joined 'Climbathon 2013', organised by the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, in the Bara Shigri glacier in July-August 2013. During the event Cosmin and eight others, including friends and a few trainees, climbed Khhang Shiling (6360m) by a new route on the north-west face, from the Bara Shigri glacier. They also attempted Kullu Makalu (6349m) but had to turn back due to rockfall. (Note *HJ* 69)

### **KR V (6258m)**

On 12 June, a team of Coalfield Nature Lovers, WB, established base camp (4700m) near Baralacha la. After establishing two more camps, on 19 June, leader Paresh Chandra Nath, Subrata Roy and two Sherpas reached the summit of KR V.

The Bhadrakali Pathfinders Adventurers, WB, led by Debabrata Mukherjee, began their approach march on 30 August from Baralacha la towards Chandratat. They reached Transit Camp (4718m) that night, and on 31 August their base camp (4955m) beyond Tokpo Gongma. After continuing on the Koa Rong glacier, skirting below the hanging glaciers of KR VII they established Camp 1 (5304 m) on 3 November. The summit camp was established on 5 November at 5705m, below the east face of KR V. On 6 September, by 15.15 they had climbed up to 6089m by a new route on the east face but had to turn back because of lack of time and protection. They feel that most of the earlier teams have not identified KR V properly and thus have made wrong claims. (The HC mountain climbing authentication team led by Divyesh Muni *prima facie* agrees with this statement; their detailed analysis will be published in *HJ* 70.)

### **KR II (6187m)**

After establishing base camp at 4650m, Spandan Kumar Malik and the Kolkata Trekkers Youth, WB, established three high camps and climbed the east ridge of the mountain. From the summit camp at 5630m, on 30 August, Mohene, Indranil and three high altitude supporters reached the summit at 07.50 in whiteout conditions. Though they did not have any clear views, they could locate and photograph the snow picket left at the summit in 2011 by a team from West Bengal (Sonarpur Arohi Club).

### **P6080m, Miyar valley**

In 2012 the Scottish Zanskar Expedition attempted a couple of unclimbed 6000m peaks in the Namkha Tokpo. They had climbed one peak and attempted another. However, a potential route up the south face was spotted, and in June 2013 Rob Adams, Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy Nisbet (leader) and Susan Jensen returned to attempt an ascent from the Himachal Pradesh (as opposed to Zanskar) side of the range. After



Pensilungpa glacier. (Derek Buckle)

establishing base camp (4500m) in a subsidiary valley to the Miyar valley, heavy snowfall over several days limited the time for approach to that objective so they made a first ascent of P6080m after establishing ABC at 5400m. All the team members climbed the southwest face of the mountain to reach the summit on 20 June. Many smaller summits were also climbed by the team.

## JAMMU & KASHMIR

## ZANSKAR AND KISHTWAR

### Hagshu (6515m)

In July 2013, a team consisting of Bryan Hylenski, Jake Preston, Jonn Jeannerret, Gabe Thomas and Dan Kopperud aimed for Hagshu, P6055m and P6035m located in the Hagshu glacier. They approached the area starting from Akshow village near Ringdom and placed three high camps above ABC. They could reach 6440m on Hagshu before turning back due to bad weather conditions. They achieved two first ascents during the expedition: P6035m was climbed on 19 July and P6055m (their altimeter registered 6191m at the summit) was climbed on 28 July. (Article *HJ* 69).

### P5700m (Kange glacier)

A French team of three, led by Chance Emmanuel, began their trek from Akshow village and on 8 September established base camp at 3800m near the snout of the Kange glacier. They established one more camp at 4500m. From this camp the leader and Donadey Nicolas climbed the north face in alpine style, to reach the summit on 25 September in one push.

### P5802m and P5825m (Pensilungpa glacier)

In September-October 2013 a British team from the Alpine Club, consisting of Derek Buckle (leader), Mike Pinney, Chris Storie and Tony Westcott, visited the Pensilungpa glacier in the Zaskar region. In addition to general exploration of the area, they made the first ascents of two summits on the Pensilungpa-Durung Drung divide: P5802m (proposed name Hidden Peak) and P5825m (proposed name Twin Peak). (Note *HJ* 69)

tion to general exploration of the area, they made the first ascents of two summits on the Pensilungpa-Durung Drung divide: P5802m (proposed name Hidden Peak) and P5825m (proposed name Twin Peak). (Note *HJ* 69)

### Kishtwar Kailash (6451m)

Brits Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden completed the first ascent of Kish-twar Kailash in alpine style from 4 to 10 October 2013, climbing 1500m on the south-west face. They were supported by Mike Morrison and Rob Smith. The team approached the mountain from Machail village and entered Dharlang nala. Base camp was established at 4000m; after acclimatisation and reconnaissance, the peak was climbed in a week, in alpine style. (Article *HJ* 69)

## LADAKH

### Jungdung Kangri (6060m)

James Monypenny (UK) and Cory Hall (Canada) made the first ascent of Jungdung Kangri, which lies hidden in the Palzampiu valley of Ladakh. The team first tried to gain access from the south through Likir, however the pass could not be crossed by mules. They then headed north by road to the Nubra valley. After a two-day walk with a couple of mules, the team reached base camp at 5090m in a pristine alpine meadow. A high camp was established at 5522m, below the west side of Jungdung Kangri. From there they reached the summit by a route which they named *The Monypenny Hall of Fame* (650 m, ED1 90° A2++) in an alpine style ascent.

### P6046m, Kang Yabat range

A small British team under the leadership of Douglas Briton climbed P 6046m in the Kang Yabat range, in the Gya area of Ladakh. From Salsal on the Manali-Leh highway, the team followed the Yabat river to approach the mountain. After establishing three camps and a bivouac above base camp, Caroline McCann and Matt Jones reached the summit via the south face of the mountain. They proposed the name Cha Ri, meaning a mountain looking like a large bird. (Note *HJ* 69)

## EAST KARAKORAM

### Chamshen (7017m), North Shukpa Kunchang glacier

A joint Indian-British team led by Divyesh Muni and Victor Saunders entered Sakang Lungpa and made the first crossing of the Sakang col (6150m) to reach North Shukpa Kunchang glacier. On the night of 14 August, a wind blast from an avalanche down the north face of Saser Kangri II struck the camp on the glacier, and Andy Parkin suffered major injuries as he and his tent were thrown into a crevasse. After being pulled out of the crevasse by Susan Jensen and Victor Saunders, he was rescued



Summit camp on Lung Khor glacier. Left – right: South-east Shupka Kunchang glacier, Pyramidal peak, Sagtopga glacier and Ngapo Kangri. (IAF 2013 Expedition)

by Indian Air Force helicopters in very unfavourable weather conditions. On 21 August, all four remaining members of the expedition and six supporting Sherpas reached the summit of Chamshen by the west ridge. (Article *HJ* 69)

#### Plateau Peak (7300m)

The Himalayan Club Kolkata section team, under the leadership of Debraj Dutta and consisting of eight members and 10 high altitude supporters, achieved the first ascent of this giant of the East Karakoram. This peak was attempted many times during last few years by various Indian and joint expeditions without success. The Himalayan Club team approached the mountain from the west via the Phukpoche glacier. After establishing three high camps, four members and five high altitude supporters reached the summit on 31 July 2013. (Article *HJ* 69)

#### Rongdo valley explorations and climbs

An Indian Air Force team of 12 members under the leadership of Gp Capt VK Sashindran explored the Rongdo valley and climbed seven peaks during a 35-day expedition in May-June 2013. This was only the third expe-

dition in the valley. After establishing base camp at 4790m, from a few high camps they climbed Sa'i Lhamo (6030m), Khyung Kangri (6183m), Chu Skeyes Kangri (6053m), Langpoche (5968m), Odgsal I (6234m), Odgsal II (6028m) and Charok (6123m). They also attempted Lung Khor (6160m), previously climbed and identified as Gazgazri by a Canadian team in 2012. (Article *HJ* 69)

#### Other News

Dr MS Gill, past president of the Himalayan Club has had a long, abiding and continued interest in the Himalaya on a personal as well as professional level. As a fitting tribute, the Himalayan Club has conferred upon him the title of President Emeritus.

For the last 35 years at least, Harish Kapadia has been a personality very closely associated with the *Himalayan Journal*. He has been editor of the *Journal* for over three decades, is the Human Wikipedia of the Indian Himalaya and has authored several books on areas and aspects of the Himalaya. In recognition of his tireless contribution, the Himalayan Club has conferred upon Harish Kapadia the title of Editor Emeritus.

The Second Jagdish C Nanavati Award for Excellence in Mountaineering was awarded to Debabrata Mukherjee for exploration over the Chaukhamba col, a high-risk but wonderful maiden exploration of a very difficult route. This exploration linked the Bhagirath Kharak glacier with the Gangotri glacier, a most direct route.

The Second Jagdish Nanavati Garud Medal for outstanding support staff was awarded to a Darjeeling Sherpa, an unassuming man of few words but immense strength and pride in his work: Pemba Norbu, affectionately known as King Kong.

Jim Perrin received the Seventh Kekoo Naoroji Book Award for Himalayan Literature for his book *Shipton and Tilman*, which is a rare and wry insight into the lives of these itinerant adventurers.

I am thankful to Harish Kapadia, Nandini Purandare, Lindsay Griffin and the staff of Indian Mountaineering Foundation for their valuable inputs.