

with the main east ridge, which we followed to the summit. This was the second ascent of the peak. The first was made in 1991 by an Indo-British expedition, jointly led by Harish Kapadia and Dave Wilkinson. We appear to have been the first expedition to this area since 1991.

The approach to Chong Kumdan is from the Nubra Valley, which lies north of the famous Khardung La. This region is sandwiched between Pakistan-occupied Kashmir on the northwest and the Aksai Chin area on the northeast. The approach to the mountain is along the historic Silk Route to Yarkand over the famous Saser La (pass), a route known as the “Skeleton’s Trail.” We used 50 horses to carry nearly two tons of equipment and rations across the Saser La (5,375m) and two major glaciers (Aqtash and Thangman). The horsemen from Ladakh were of tremendous assistance in finding a way across the glaciers’ ice and rocks. The Shyok River (“river of death”) brought the expedition to a halt at the other end of the Thangman Glacier. The river blocked the route for the horses. Expedition members and support staff carried the loads from this point on over rock slabs along the banks of the river.

Our main ambition had been to climb the virgin peak of Chong Kumdan II (7,004m). On reaching base camp, we explored a route through the South Chong Kumdan Glacier, only to be faced by huge gaping crevasses, towering seracs, and penitents. The top snow layer had disappeared, due to global warming. The ice was bare and exposed, and it was dangerous to travel the glacier with the equipment and rations required. So we shifted focus to Chong Kumdan I, which minimized glacier travel.

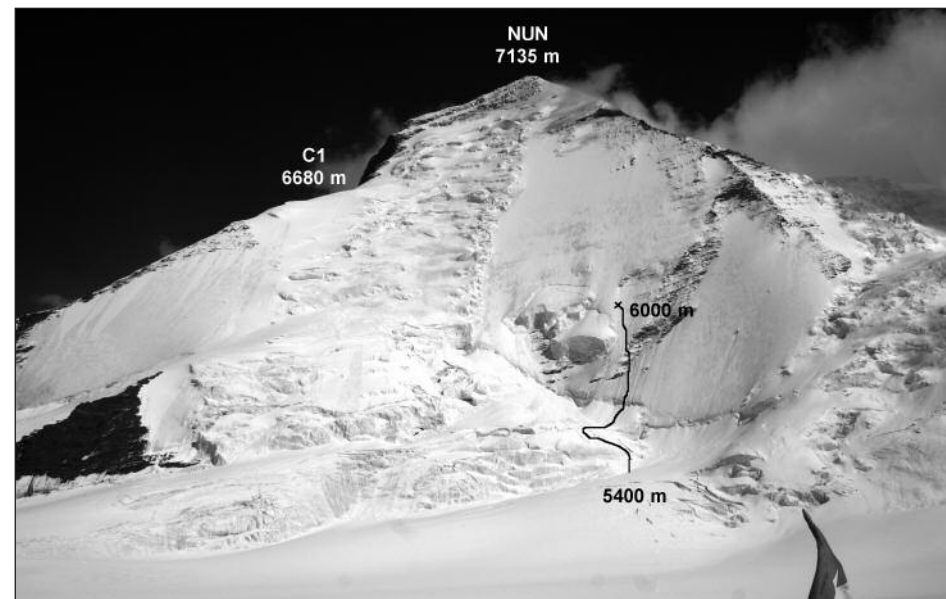
The route on Chong Kumdan I involved 45° to 55° ice for 400m to the crest of the south-east ridge. We fixed 500m of line on this section. We then followed the crest of the southeast ridge for a few hundred meters to 6,450m, where we established Camp 2. The 20° to 30° slopes were underlain by hard ice. We spent nearly four hours excavating tent platforms. From Camp 2, we climbed the remainder of the ridge to where it intersects the east ridge near 6,800m.

Above Camp 2 we fixed four ropes and continued the route past several gendarmes, passing a cornice on the right at the top of the slope. This part of the climb could be made without fixed lines, as the slopes were moderate: a maximum of about 45° near the intersection with the east ridge. Due to poor snow, it took more than five hours to negotiate the last section to the summit.

One of our Kumauni support staff, Anand Ram, passed away on August 10 due to altitude sickness at the Saser Brangza Army Camp. Our Sherpa Sirdar, Ang Tashi, took ill on August 15 at Camp 1. He was accompanied down to ABC by expedition members on the 16th. When there was no improvement in his health, despite being provided bottled oxygen and medication, he was evacuated by helicopter and hospitalized at Hundar, where he recovered. Tashi had been climbing regularly at high altitude, had climbed Everest, and was one of the fittest Sherpas around.

DIVYESH MUNI, *Honorary Secretary, Himalayan Club, India*

Nun, northwest face, attempt. In September Jean-Marc Challandes, Sebastien Gerber, Andreas Hutter, Bernhard Spack, and we established an advance base camp at 5,400m on the big plateau that lies at the foot of the 1,700m-high northwest face of Nun. In three days we equipped the first part of the face with fixed ropes. We planned to install a small bivouac in a crevasse at about 6,100m. The plan was to continue from there in alpine style and descend the northwest ridge to an altitude camp (C1) that had been previously set up at 6,680m.



The 1,700m-high northwest face of Nun (7,135m). Marked are the new route and the point where ice conditions become critically bad. On the left, the northwest ridge where we installed C1 at 6,680m. Team NUNzero7

However, on September 18, when Jean-Marc was climbing above Josep and Andreas at 6,000m, he heard a loud noise underneath his crampons, and the big ice slab they were on dropped a few centimeters. At this point, considering the bad ice conditions, they gave up the northwest face attempt.

At the same time, the other three climbers were acclimating at C1 on the northwest ridge. On September 19, in good weather conditions, Simon, followed by Bernhard, reached the summit (7,135m), while Sebastien stayed at C1 (6,680m) because of altitude sickness. Then early winter and heavy snowfall prevented the rest of the climbers from reaching the summit by the northwest ridge. For more information, see www.nun007.ch

SIMON PERRITAZ and JOSEP SOLA I CAROS, *Team NUNzero7, Swiss Alpine Club*

LADAKH & ZANSKAR

Shafat Fortress, Colorado Route. From August 8 to 12 Jonny Copp and Micah Dash made the first ascent of the Shafat Fortress (ca 19,500'), via the east face. The 21-pitch Colorado Route is 1,000m, VI 5.11 M6 C1, and merits a feature article in this *Journal*.

Peak 5,200m (Golden Sentinel). This small peak near Gulmotonga (Kargil) was summited on August 20 by an expedition led by Italian Maurizio Orsi. They followed the east face and north ridge. They propose naming the peak Golden Sentinel.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*