

# **British Tibet Expedition 2000**

## **Expedition Report**

for the

### **Mount Everest Foundation**

Ref: 00/22

**Sole UK member: Dr Charles Clarke**

#### **Summary**

Exploration in the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha, Tibet in July/August 2000. This is an area hitherto almost unvisited by foreigners. With a small party of Tibetans I reached the glacial approaches to Jongla Mokbo P.5884m at 30°41'N, 94°41'E and surrounding unknown 6000m peaks. Travel from Lhasa via Naqchu, Diru, Pengar village, Tam La and Pa village. Sketch maps of the area have been prepared.

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## **Introduction: the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha**

It is now no secret that a major mountain range lies between latitudes 30° and 31°N and longitude 93° and 95°E - one can pick out substantial summits from the briefest glance at any modern map of central Tibet. These peaks which rise to almost 7000m form the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha. They are scarcely a continuous range in the alpine sense but discrete massifs separating gorges and source tributaries of two great rivers, the Salween and Yigong Tsangpo.

The Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha remains almost unknown to mountaineers and travellers – apart from the peaks and satellites of Sepu Kangri<sup>1</sup>, the north-western massif which I visited on MEF-supported expeditions in 1997 and 1998 following the initial 1996 reconnaissance by Chris Bonington and myself.

This report describes a brief exploratory journey into the central and eastern parts of the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha in July 2000.

Nearby the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha are several major peaks. To the south lies Namche Barwa 7756m and its satellite Jaila Bairi 6820m. To the north (just north of the Sokxian-Tengchen road) there is the discrete massif (I think unvisited) of Bug'yai Kangri or Buchia Kangri 6251m, 6328m.

In the Western Nyenchan Tanglha range (west of the Lhasa-Naqchu road) are Nyenchen Tanglha Feng 7182m (7090m), Samdeng Kangza 6110m (6590m, probably Mt Jadu<sup>2</sup>) and many other peaks, more accessible than their eastern counterparts.

East lie the peaks of the Salween and Mekong gorges on the Tibet-Yunnan border, notably Kagebo 6740m (Moirigkawagarbo 6740m).

The massifs of the Eastern Nyenchan Tanglha itself can be separated into five. To the north-west at 30°55'N 93°50'E is Sepu Kangri. Chris Bonington and I first approached Sepu in 1996 from the north from Diru (Salween tributaries) and later on the same expedition from Jiali in the south (Yigong Tsangpo). We chose the northern approach for the climbing expeditions in '97 and '98.

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<sup>1</sup>Bonington C, Clarke C. *Tibet's Secret Mountain, the triumph of Sepu Kangri*. Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1999. ISBN 0 297 819844.

<sup>2</sup>*Immortal Mountains in the Snow Region*. p. 125. Tibet Peoples Publishing House 1995. ISBN 7-223 00880-6/J.26.

Prior to the 1998 climbing expedition Elliot Robertson and myself trekked with Pasang Choempel, one of our Tibetan companions from '96 and '97 to reach Sepu from the north-east. We travelled by road to Chamdo, making our way to Lhorong, Pemba and Tsoka. We crossed the Shargung La on foot from the near village of Pemba (or Palbar) and then made our way over several passes into the Nagru and Tashi Lung valleys. We reached the northern side of the Sepu basin by a difficult 5000m pass, the Sa La. East of Sepu Kangri we passed the spectacular Kokpo 6302m massif (see photographs).

We continued exploration west of Sepu via the Yam La finding that we could cross to the south of Sepu (a journey Pasang made alone). This would have entirely avoided a difficult road and lengthy approach on foot that Bonington and I had taken during the second part of our 1996 trip to Sepu via Jiali.

The second Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha massif, the largest of the five, runs east-west slightly north of 30°30'N. This contains the sacred peaks of Jongla Mokbo 5884m at 30°41'N, 94°41'E which is south-west of the Shargung La and Kila Pu 6110m at 30°44'N, 94°11'E (see Pemba sheet in appendix).

There are many higher 6000-6500m peaks nearby but Jongla Mokbo is the best known locally. It looks higher than it is because it rises out of a fertile valley. Jongla Mokbo and Kila Pu are the guardians in local folklore of the ancient Lhasa-Beijing yak route, Gya Lam. The present journey was into this massif and briefly into the area south of Jongla Mokbo. We approached from the north - with hindsight perhaps not the simplest way in, a matter to be mentioned later.

Of the three massifs to the south-west I can say little. Mount Kajaqiao 6447m at 30°30'N, 93°30'E<sup>3</sup> (and see photograph) is probably P.6575m (at 30°30'N, 93°31'E) on the Chao sheet.

The name of the highest peak of the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha remains a mystery. I think it is P.6920m at 30°21'N, 93°55'E (Chao sheet). I sometimes had distant views of peaks in this region.

### **Roads and towns**

Road access to this region presents some difficulties. For those unfamiliar with central Tibet a brief description follows. The China-Tibet tour map

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<sup>3</sup>*Immortal Mountains in the Snow Region*.p. 168

(1993) is the most useful – a copy of the relevant section is in the appendix.

Theoretically there is a motorable road in a circuit of some 2500km from Lhasa-Damshung-Naqchu-Sokxian-Tengchen-Rioche-Chamdo-Bangda (Chamdo airport)-Paksho-Pome-Bayi-Gyamda-Lhasa. The Lhasa-Damshung-Naqchu section is tarmac – in good conditions this journey takes only 6-8 hours. At present the Lhasa-Damshung section is closed, causing a lengthy detour on unsurfaced road – and hence a long day's drive from Lhasa-Naqchu.

From Naqchu to Chamdo the road is unsurfaced and slow - often <20km/hr. In 1998 we travelled by Land Cruiser on this road taking four days to reach Chamdo with frequent hold-ups due to landslides. Largely unsurfaced road continues south from Chamdo towards Bangda; we travelled about 100km along this in 1998.

I have not travelled on the southern part of the loop (Bangda-Paksho-Lhasa), though I have tried. A major landslide closed the road near the town of Pome several years ago.

Several minor unsurfaced roads penetrate the central mountainous area. Some 10km south of Naqchu a road leads into Chali. We used this in 1996 and its execrable secondary branch road to Jiali (Chali-chu, Lhari, or Lharigo) to reach the south side of Sepu Kangri. This area is sensitive and presently closed to foreigners – the Chali district is the original home of the two rival claimants to the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.

A second substantial minor road leaves the Naqchu-Sokxian-Chamdo road at Kilometre 121 (east out of Naqchu) for Diru, a county town a further 150km onwards. This unsurfaced road was quite feasible in 1996, '97 and '98 but almost impassable this July (2000) – and officially closed.

From Diru the road continues south and east for a further 80km over the 5000m Sha La to Senza, and its nearby village Khinda, the roadhead for the northern approach to Sepu. The mountain is reached via Samda Gompa, a fine Bonpo monastery. Some 5km further east of Senza, down the valley from Khinda is Pengar (Pengar Gompa), our 2000 roadhead. The road does continue towards Pemba (Pelbar/Tsoka/Banbar - the names on maps are a muddle) and Lhaze but has been blocked east of Pengar Gompa for several years.

The alternative approach from the east, the Chamdo-Lhorong road presented some difficulties when we used it in 1998 but only because of major roadworks. This road continues west from Lhorong via Lhaze to Tsoka and a district HQ town (unmarked on most maps) called Da Martang. The road continues towards Pengar but is blocked (see above).

Tsoka is the point of departure for the Shargung La, the 5000m pass Elliot and I crossed in 1998. In 2000 a road from Tsoka now crosses this pass and will by the autumn of 2000 be completed as far as Nyochoge (also, Ngoichoge - pronounce this if you can...something like Nyo-chu), the district HQ near Pa village where we stayed this year.

These roads are I suspect at their worst in summer after heavy rains. They are open all the year round though the passes do become blocked by snow in winter. Trucks or Land Cruisers are the usual means of transport.

### **Personnel**

Dr Charles Clarke	56	British
Pasang Choempel	36	Tibetan, guide and friend from previous years
Gyatso Tsultrem	19	Tibetan, cook
Sesum Dhargye	49	Tibetan, horseman

I had originally planned to have a British companion but in the end went alone. In Lhasa, Pasang and I decided to take a third person – Gyatso, his brother-in-law – for reasons of flexibility, division of labour and general security. The combination seemed sensible; I would feel a little uneasy travelling as a two-some.

### **Itinerary – narrative**

#### The road to Pengar

It is almost impossible in Lhasa to ascertain accurate information about road conditions outside the capital. There is no equivalent of the AA or RAC. However, one has to make an educated guess to name all towns and villages *en route* in order to apply for a travel permit. I found I had an added disadvantage – I could not extend my 30 day Chinese visa. This curtailed what I had hoped would be a six week trip.

I had originally hoped to use the southern, Lhasa-Pome road to approach the mountains of the Jongla Mokbo region from the south. We were discouraged by rumours of difficulties and soon abandoned the idea.

Similarly, we were told that the Naqchu-Chamdo road was 'probably blocked' at Tengchen and thus we dismissed the idea of approaching via Lhorong and Tsoka from the east. Chali was out of bounds politically.

This left us little alternative – it was back to Diru, the familiar roadhead at Khinda and an approach from the north. My plan was to travel south from Khinda, passing west of Sepu Kangri (using routes Elliot, Pasang and I had explored in 1998) and then work east along valleys and passes south of the mountain. In the event this route proved impossible this year.

After four nights in Lhasa (acclimatisation, permits, shopping, arranging Land Cruiser) on 12<sup>th</sup> July we drove to Damshung on the Naqchu road. The following morning a sound somewhere between a grindstone and a metal lathe issued from the rear differential of the Land Cruiser. Pasang summoned a replacement vehicle using his Nokia 5110 mobile phone (the same model I use in London!). We pressed on to Naqchu, a dismal muddy place arriving after dark. We camped in a spot we knew a kilometre or so out of town on the Chamdo road.

The 270km to Diru the following day was the usual bumpy ride, with an added problem that road over the last pass before Diru was closed - road repairs after landslides. Some judicious negotiation with an attractive female supervisor solved the problem. We were allowed to proceed at our own risk, and the road was feasible - just. This was a taste of things to come.

We arrived in Diru on 14<sup>th</sup> July and passed quickly through this small market town – foreigners are almost unknown here, and we had had minor skirmishes with officialdom in previous years. Immediately after Diru a substantial bridge crosses the Salween at a hydroelectric station and heads for the Sha La. Rumours of difficulties over this pass were a gross underestimate.

All bridges were washed away higher in the Sha Shung, the Sha La approach valley. We were told that the zig-zags over the pass were blocked by rock and mud slides - an academic issue, as we could not drive to reach them. There seemed little alternative to returning to Diru next day, braving the authorities and trying to find a way to complete the final 80km to Senza/Khinda. Waiting for the road to be cleared - walking with horses - an alternative route? - we did not know.

In the event the issue was solved, as usual by money. Thondup, the leader of a village outside Diru agreed to organise ten motorcycles to carry the three of us with our loads over the Sha La to Senza. 3500 yuan (some £300) negotiated down from 5000 yuan, for ten bikes with riders for one day felt excessive, but we were in no position to argue. We accepted the offer, and put to the back of our minds how we might reverse the journey (there is no telephone at Senza, and Pasang's Nokia mobile had long since lost its China Telecom signal). 'At ten o'clock tomorrow you will leave Diru' - Thondup left us with a wry smile.

At 0955 on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July the small paved courtyard of the Diru guesthouse rattled with the roar of ten motorbikes driven by the local Hells Angels, a cheerful crowd of variable competence driving Jianjing 125s. Pasang, Gyatso and I rode pillion; while loads went on the other seven bikes. We bounced, splashed and skidded through rivers and mudslides, raced up the Sha La and by early afternoon descended into the Senza valley. It seemed for a moment that our problems were over as we came to a halt at Khinda, the small village at 3900m where we had camped in previous years – the roadhead for Sepu Kangri.

### Onward travel

Our first plan was to retrace old ground to Samda Gompa. We would then walk or ride south to the Yam Shung, pass along the southern side of Sepu Kangri and then via Jaggong and Alando to reach Jongla Mokbo and the main range of the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha. Thereafter we would try to exit south, towards Pome on the southern Lhasa-Chamdo road.

'You'll only find old people and children in Khinda and no horses' a gloomy passer-by had told us. The labour force was in the high pastures. Despite an initial friendly welcome and some familiar faces, especially Dr Choemphel the local general practitioner (no relation of Pasang), the reality of 'no horses' became clear. We were also told that the gorge east of Jaggong (south of Sepu) was impassable – thus though we could gain access to country south of Sepu, we would be unable to travel east to reach Jongla Mokbo. But a further setback was in store.

In the late afternoon Pasang and I walked back the 3km to Senza, the district headquarters. We knew the local leader, a second Thondup whom I had helped when he had had a broken leg three years previously. I felt we were about to see an old friend.

Thondup II was watching a dance of some fifty people preparing for a regional competition. With a wave of his hand he indicated that our presence was unwelcome, illegal, and turned his back to us. 'But what does he actually say, Pasang?' 'He says bugger off, go back to Lhasa, your journey is illegal' was the gist of his reply. We were crestfallen, outraged and slightly scared. We met Dr Choemphel again as we plodded back to our tents. He sympathised but had no suggestions. 'Thondup is a strange man', he said. 'But I don't want to upset him – he's building my hospital.'

The following morning we re-visited the district HQ. Thondup II refused to see us. In the courtyard outside his quarters I began a long, loud and impassioned speech to the leader, translated sentence by sentence with some embarrassment by Pasang. A crowd gathered. With absolute respect, I accepted the authority of the representatives of the state, I said, but recounted our excellent previous relations with The Peoples' Republic and the importance of The Chomolungma Foundation (the MEF). I had helped organise the visit of Chinese climbers to Britain (1980) and added various, largely fictitious connections with Chinese VIPs.

Snippets were relayed to Thondup II within. 'The English doctor says he was once welcomed in The Great Hall of The People in Beijing by a general who was on the Long March', they told him. At this Thondup II emerged. There was an abrupt change of attitude. Smiles replaced his scowl. But there were still no horses. We should move to the next village, he suggested, to Pengar, some 5km further on.

There was a certain logic to this. We could apparently travel on foot from Pengar leaving Sepu Kangri to our west, crossing several passes directly to Jongla Mokbo. The area was also, conveniently, outside Thondup II's jurisdiction. His haste to be rid of us extended to lending us his Land Cruiser to transport the baggage down the valley.

There is a spectacular Gelugpa monastery close to Pengar. I was warmly welcomed into the shrine – I think the first European visitor since Kaulbeck and Hanbury-Tracy in the 1930s. (They are probably the only Europeans who had travelled along this valley). But there were no horses. We asked everyone. We asked the leader, shopkeepers and sent messages to villages nearby. After three days we received our first offer: 800 yuan (over £60) a horse and 800 yuan a man a day. They would take us for two days only – and charge the same rate unladen on return. We would have been bankrupt within a week and left in the middle of



nowhere. The usual rate was around 20 yuan per day. I told the horseman we could hire a large vehicle for a similar sum...if only there was a road.

Finally, as so often happens our luck began to change. On the third evening, Sesum a slight, shy man and local storekeeper came to talk to Pasang at dusk after the children and hangers-on had gone. 'I have just two horses' he said. We agreed to 70 yuan per horse per day (<£6). We soon realised that Sesum the horseman was a jewel sent from heaven. He was keen to travel to Nyochoge and Pa, the villages close to Jongla Mokbo because he had relatives nearby. He then wanted to return to Pengar. He knew folk along the way. He was a good-natured man and a fiend for hard work. 'We leave tomorrow early, at 7a.m.' was his usual announcement as we arrived at a camp for the night; this was rarely before 6p.m.

Sesum had two final pieces of negotiation before departure. Both had a certain personal familiarity. One was to seek the agreement of his employers so that he could take several weeks holiday. This accomplished he had to take leave of his wife, a more difficult matter. In desperation he promised her half his wages.

On the morning of 20<sup>th</sup> July Pasang, Gyatso, Sesum and I set out on foot from Pengar with two pack horses and one unladen foal heading for the Dhakim La, Jongla Mokbo and the peaks of Nyenchen Tanglha.

#### Into the Jongla Mokbo range

In the event the five-day journey on foot over two 5000 metre passes crossing the northern mountains of the Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha was uneventful, but a fine mountain journey. The routine for our small party was familiar, living in nomad camps, walking long days over easy country, even if the weather was unsettled. The mountains we passed between Pengar and the district HQ at Nyochoge are of little interest to climbers – summits of indifferent rock with the occasional dry glacier. We had seen them in 1998.

First we crossed the Dhakim La a barren 5402m pass and dropped down to Channa Gompa, a remote monastery at the junction of the Tashi Lung and Nagru valleys (see Tibet's Secret Mountain). We then walked up the Nagru valley over the 5254m Tam (or Tang) La, the pass Elliot Robertson and I had crossed in 1998. This is a watershed between the branches of the Salween in the north and Yigong Tsangpo in the south.

Thence we dropped down the Tam Lung for two days, reaching the village of Pa, a few kilometres from Nyochoge. As we did so the weather cleared revealing Jongla Mokbo and the mountains we were heading for, a fine range of 6000m ice peaks.

We received a cordial welcome from Sesum's relatives in Pa, a village at 4050m set in grassy hillocks on a promontary above the broad fertile valley whose river flows into the Yigong Tsangpo. The ancient yak route from Beijing to Lhasa called Gya Lam runs close by. The path lies deep in a gorge leading north-east to the Shargung La, explaining perhaps why travellers have not remarked on the range so close by.

To the west Gya Lam leads towards Lhasa. In times gone by this was a route one could use at any time of the year. The journey would take several weeks. Huc and Gabet had come this way in March 1846 when they had been expelled from Lhasa. Tanda, a pass that caused them great hardship is the Shargung La. 'Where is Tanda?' I asked in Pa. 'It is the country over there, across the Shargung La', they indicated.

We were told the track south towards Pome was out of the question in summer. Rains and melting snow make the gorge south from Alando impassable. It seemed likely that we would have to return to Pengar.

We decided to divide into two parties – Pasang would spend two days travelling towards Alando to ascertain whether there was any possibility at all of finding a route south. He was justifiably nervous of returning to Lhasa after the expiration of my visa.

Meanwhile Gyatso, myself and Tashi Nyudop a local 9 year old boy headed for the Jongla Shu (valley) in an effort to gain better views of the peaks. We made our way to the snout of the glacial system south-east of Jongla Mokbo, photographed what we could during a long day.

Pa village lies between two rivers, one flowing from the Shargung La, the other from the south-east, the Jongla Chu. A track led down into the main Jongla valley, at first a broad plain. After some four hours we climbed again to around 4000m through dense forests, a narrow path snaking through woodcutters' camps towards the Jongla glacier.

Jongla Mokbo's north face towered above the valley on our right flank. The peak with fine ice flutings leading to the summit is 5884m at 30°41'N, 94°41'E (Pemba map). We walked past Jongla Mokbo and its icefall on our right, heading for a glacial lake. This was the terminal lake

of the massive Jongla glacier (my name), which at this altitude was chaotic moraine flowing from the south-east.

High mountains came into view at the valley head. These are the unnamed P. 6360, 6403, 6344, 6390 and 6520m on the Yygrong sheet. We caught a glimpse of them on our south-eastern horizon.

There seemed no immediate way up either side of the lake, but since a substantial branch valley appeared to the right, we took it. This led behind Jongla Mokbo itself – a possible route to the southern slopes of the mountain. We managed to peer into the head of this valley from a deserted village at 3900m through the forests. A spectacular ice peak, probably P.6558m at 30°36'N, 94°23'E filled the end of the valley, probably only a day's march away through the forests. 'That mountain is called Jong Fu Nena; if you come here in June you will see the gods dance there', Tashi Baba a 77 year old man from Pa told us later, his eyes glistening. 'No one lives there except for the bears'.

Sadly this marked the extent of our journey. A tantalising finale. It was time to return.

Pasang's journey to Alando simply confirmed what we had been told – there was no way south via the Alando gorge. This is solely a winter route.

### **Return**

In view of the uncertainty about road conditions, and because we had no return transport organised we could spend no more time in the area. The days were ticking by towards the expiry of my 30 day visa.

We returned by different 5000m passes, the Dho-vo La and Gu Le La and in three and a half long days we were back in camp at Pengar. Sometimes Sesum would organise horses for us to ride.

Our return to Lhasa was as easy as the outward journey was difficult, showing that impromptu travel in Tibet can work smoothly. A truck just happened to be driving from Pengar to Naqchu on 30<sup>th</sup> July. Despite a broken front spring, repaired by commandeering a derelict chassis at the roadside we reached Diru in one long day. In Naqchu we hired a taxi to Lhasa, putting Gyatso on a bus with the baggage. We were back in Lhasa three days from the roadhead.

### **Outline dates**

6 <sup>th</sup> July	London-Kathmandu
8 <sup>th</sup> July	Lhasa
12 <sup>th</sup> July	Damshung
14/15 <sup>th</sup> July	Diru
17/19 <sup>th</sup> July	Pengar
24/26 <sup>th</sup> July	Pa village, Jongla Mokbo region
29 <sup>th</sup> July	Pengar
1 <sup>st</sup> August	Lhasa
5 <sup>th</sup> August	leave Lhasa

### **Future Prospects**

This small expedition was wholly unsuccessful in mountaineering terms, largely because we lost time with the various holdups. However I felt we achieved more than it seemed possible at many stages during our journey. Often it seemed that all we would manage was a trip on rough roads without any view of the main peaks.

The maze of glaciers is shown on the maps in the appendix. The easiest approach to this range is now via Chamdo (by air or by road), on to Lhorong and now by road over the Shargung La. October is probably the best month to climb. Before the rains of June, July and August the winter snows are slow to clear, as we had found out in April/May of 1997.

This is an area ripe for further exploration and ideal for small expeditions. Doubtless if the political climate permits the range will receive many visits in future years.

## Expenses

Item	Yuan	Rs (Nep)	\$	£
LHR-KTM				400 return
XS baggage		400	65	177
Visas				141.50
Film				81.52
GPS				220
Insurance				279
Tents				380
Taxis	400			50
KTM-Lhasa			383	
Presents				65
Permits	13,000			
Permits	7500			
→Diru	4800 (road)			
→Senza	3500 (bikes)			
Horses	2705			
→Naqchu	400 (truck)			
→Lhasa	1650 (taxi)			
→KTM	2290 (air)			
CTMA meal	276			
Pasang	2000		50	
Gyatso	1000			
Hotels	1390		116	
Altimeter				12 (repair)
Boots				8 (repair)
KTM misc		1000	50	
Food &c	4000			
Books		2840		
Airport tax	90	1100		
Photos &c				300
Maps				350
Total (local)	45001	5340	664	
Exchange	12=£1	105=£1	1.5=£1	1
Total £	£3750	£58.85	£442.66	£2937.02
Grand Total	-----	-----	-----	<b>£7188.53</b>

Income: £1300 Mount Everest Foundation

Remainder: Personal – from Dr Charles Clarke

## Travel/Logistics/Permits

As many know, Qatar Airways fly to Kathmandu via Doha – the flights are some of the cheapest around. The Kathmandu-Lhasa section is run by China SW Airlines who fly on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Travel by road is also possible from Kathmandu to Zangmu. The first issue for a single traveller or small party heading for the wilds is the Chinese visa.

### Visas for China

Chinese embassies in different countries seem to grant visas for different durations. In Britain, unless one has a good reason the London Embassy issues visas for 30 days only. Ways round this are an expedition permit issued by the China-Tibet Mountaineering Association, Lhasa or the Chinese Mountaineering Association, Beijing or a >30 day trekking permit issued by TIST.

It was possible to mail your passport to an agent in Hong Kong and have a three month Chinese visa issued there. This avenue has recently closed (November 2000) – I gather you have to go personally to Hong Kong, but can still enter Tibet this way, either returning to Kathmandu or flying in via Chengdu.

In either case, do not put Tibet on the application! It is likely to be turned down.

A visa cannot, as far as I am aware be lengthened on arrival in Lhasa.

So, on arrival in Kathmandu armed with a 30 day visa, how does one gain entry to Tibet as a single traveller or as a small party? There are various Nepalese agents who can help.

### Agents in Kathmandu

There are numerous travel agents in Kathmandu who are experts at taking tour groups to Tibet, often at short notice. The agent I used was Royal Mountain, Kathmandu. email: [royalmt@mos.com.np](mailto:royalmt@mos.com.np) . They also have a Lhasa office at the Yak Hotel, email: [potala@usa.net](mailto:potala@usa.net) . For \$110 Royal Mountain Kathmandu added my name to a party of various nationalities leaving for Lhasa. I met the group at Kathmandu airport; we flew to Lhasa, entered as a group with a permit listing some ten names – I never saw them again.

Bikrum Pandey a staunch supporter of British expeditions can also help.  
Bikrum Pandey – Himalaya Expeditions, Kathmandu.  
email: [bikrum@himalayas.org](mailto:bikrum@himalayas.org) .

### Permits within Tibet

Travel for a single person or a party of two presents a problem. Either your expedition will have been organised through CTMA (who deal with permits) - or, you need a registered guide who must secure:

- 1). An Alien's Travel permit
- 2). A Police permit
- 3). A Military permit
- 4). A guide's permit

The guide does all this via the Tibet Tourist Bureau. All this cost some 20,000 yuan (£1770) – it would have been much the same for two persons. I gathered that some of the fees were to oil the wheels. Negotiations took three days.

### Guides in Lhasa

There are numerous agencies in Lhasa. My limited research indicate that they are fine for organising travel along main roads, and the usual treks but that they tend to be out of their depth when one wants to go off the beaten track. TIST is one reliable agency unless one has a personal contact.

### Food

I found no need to take any food from UK. We bought supplies in the markets of Lhasa and often ate in restaurants in the larger towns. Towards the end of the journey we were reduced to *tsampa*, tea, cheese and dried meat - the staple diet of Tibet for generations; an acquired taste but quite adequate.

## Appendix: maps

These maps are for personal study only and are copyright.

1. The China Tibet Tour Map 1:3,000,000 (ISBN7-80544-291-8/K-280) 1993 is to my knowledge the best overall road map available. This is a copy of the relevant section of the sheet. The county boundaries (pink-ish dashed lines running through the Nyenchen Tanglha) cause some confusion - they are not roads!

2. The Russian sheets 1:200,000 and 1:1,000,000 provide useful ground information for valleys, heights and positions of peaks. These seem accurate. Placenames are however highly inaccurate, both in name and position and they are all in Cyrillic script. Considerable work has been put into making these amended versions for this report; all placenames and much other data have been removed. Added are those towns and village that are known to exist - there are obviously many more places but the minimum has been included to maintain clarity.

The 'Eastern Nyenchen Tanglha' sheet covers 29° to 31°N, 93° to 96°E - this includes all the 6000m peaks of the range and potential approaches to them. Original data from 1:1,000,000 sheet.

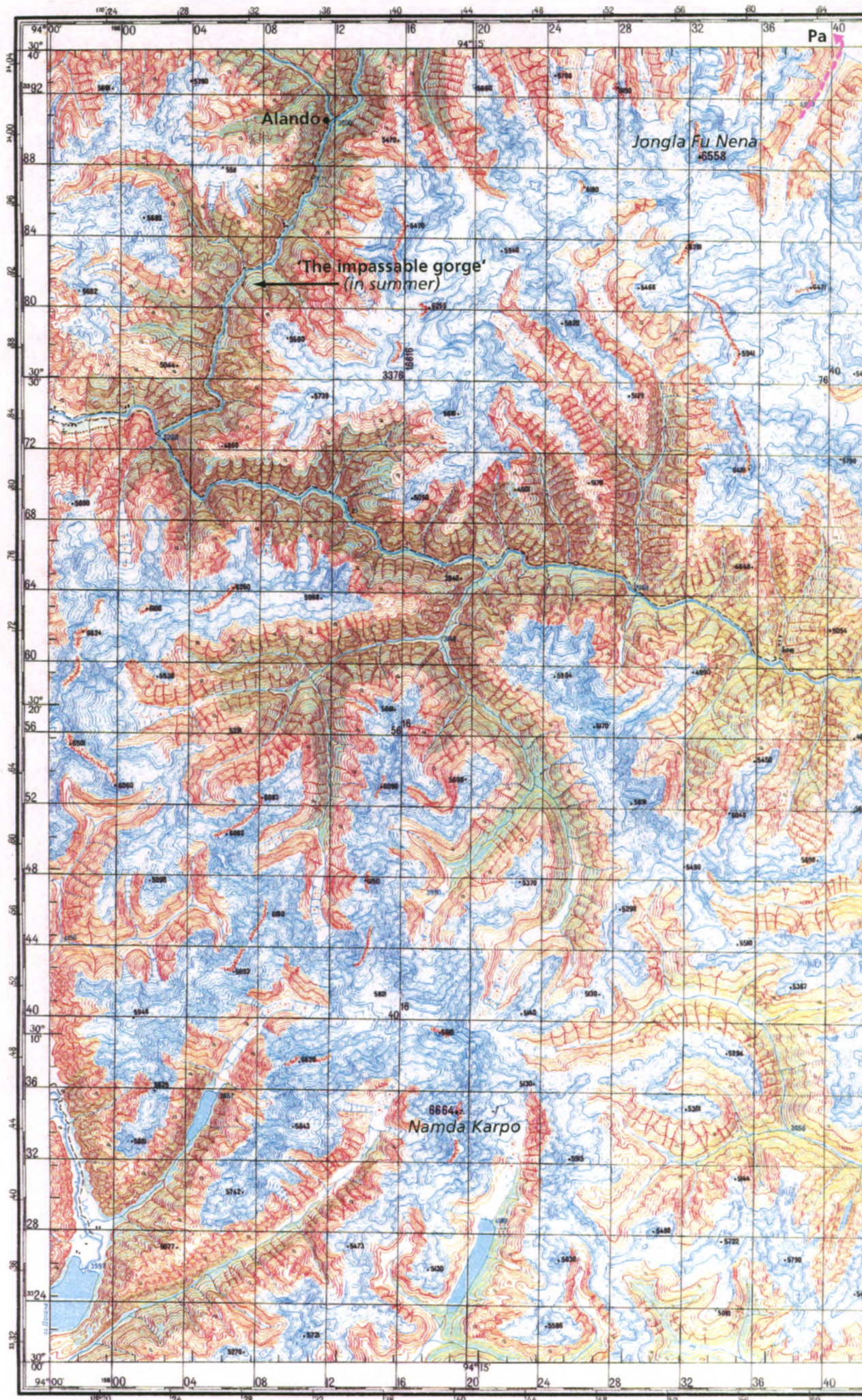
The 'Pemba, Chao, Lharigo and Yigrong' sheets are from 1:200,000 maps covering a similar area.

Anyone studying these maps will become aware that the heights of peaks sometimes differ between the 1:1,000,000 and 1:200,000 versions. In this short report I have used heights of peaks on the 1:200,000 versions - ordinates are in degrees and minutes.

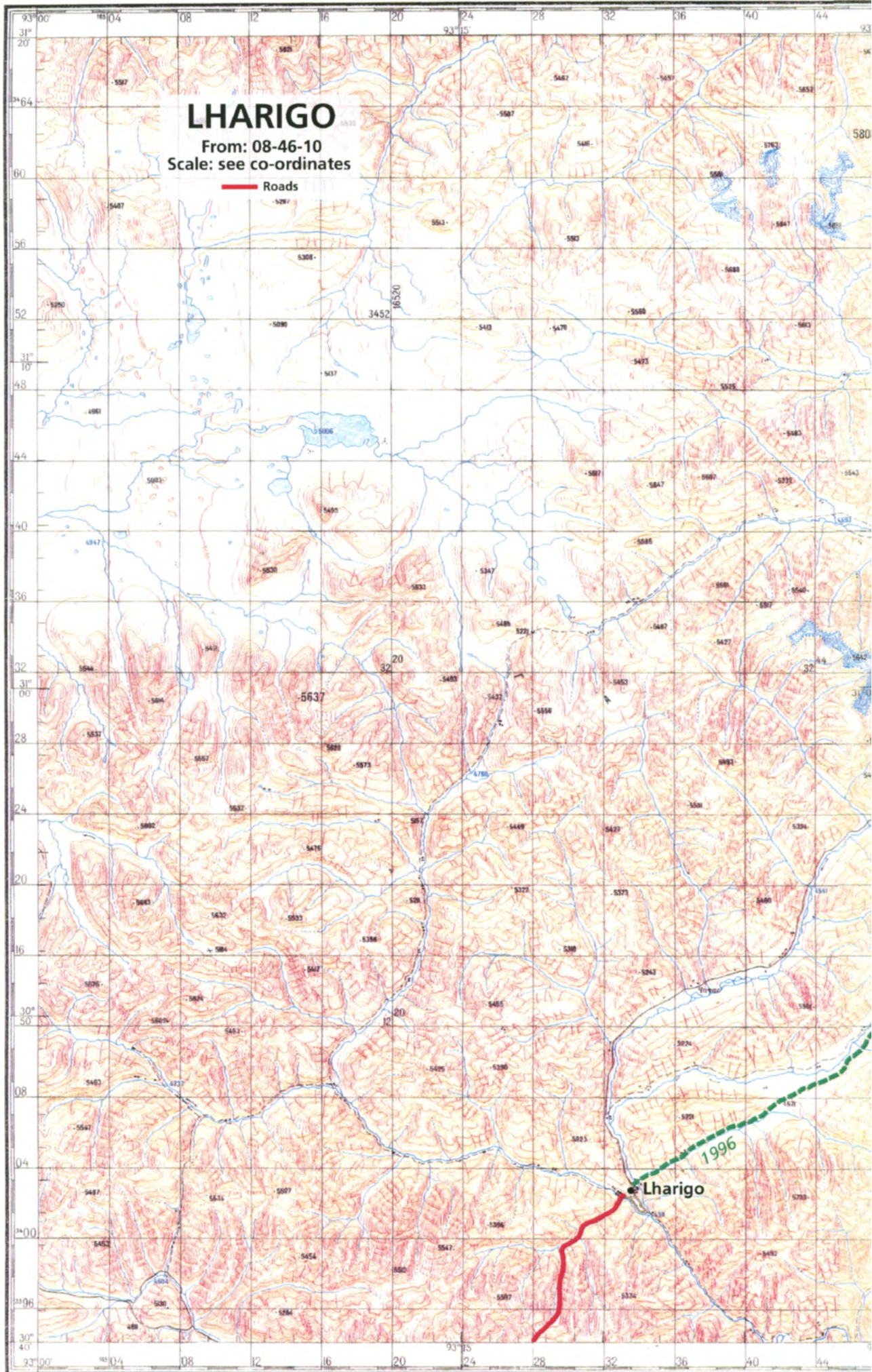
Lhorong is spelt incorrectly as Lharong on the Pemba sheet.

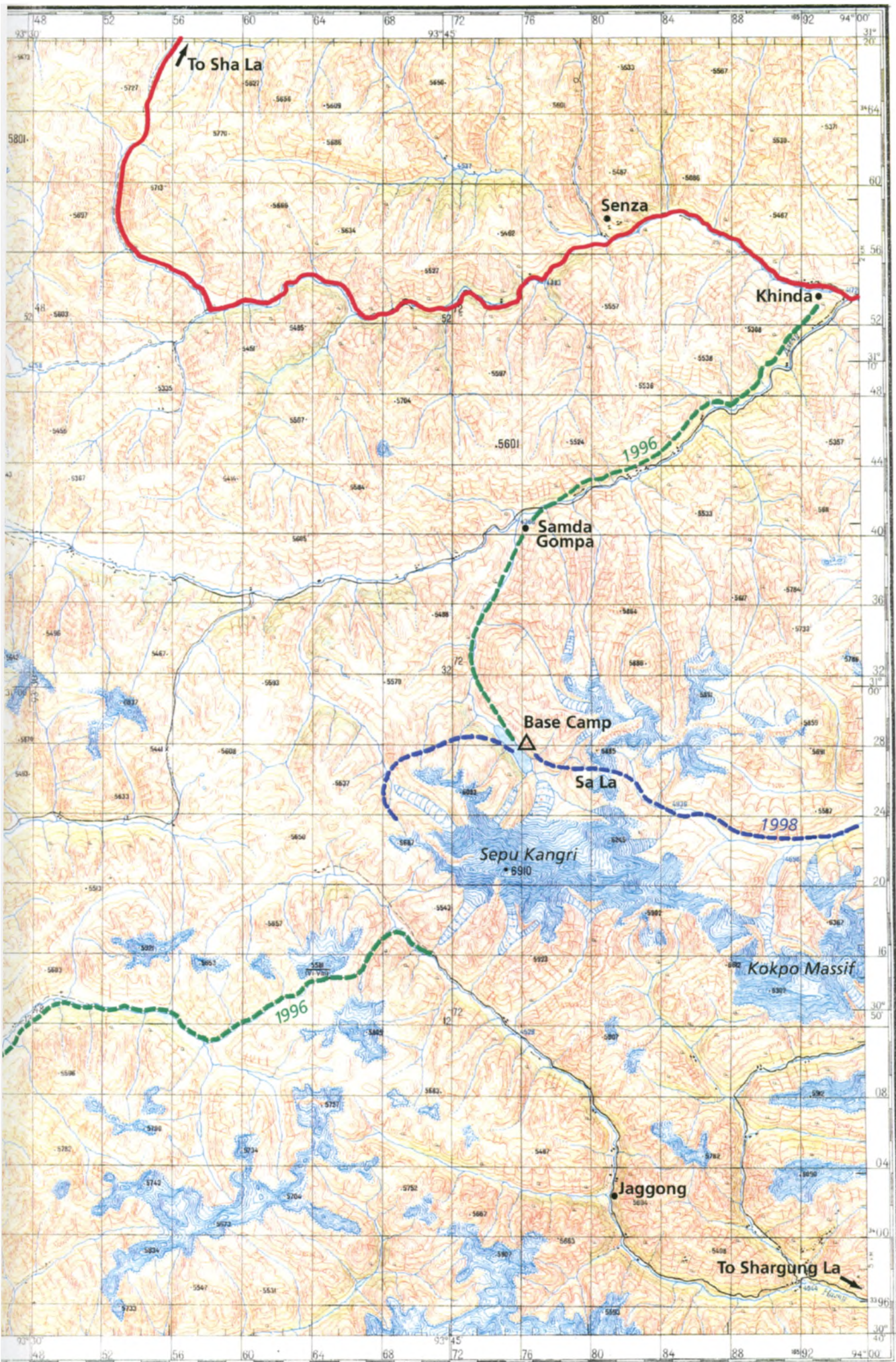




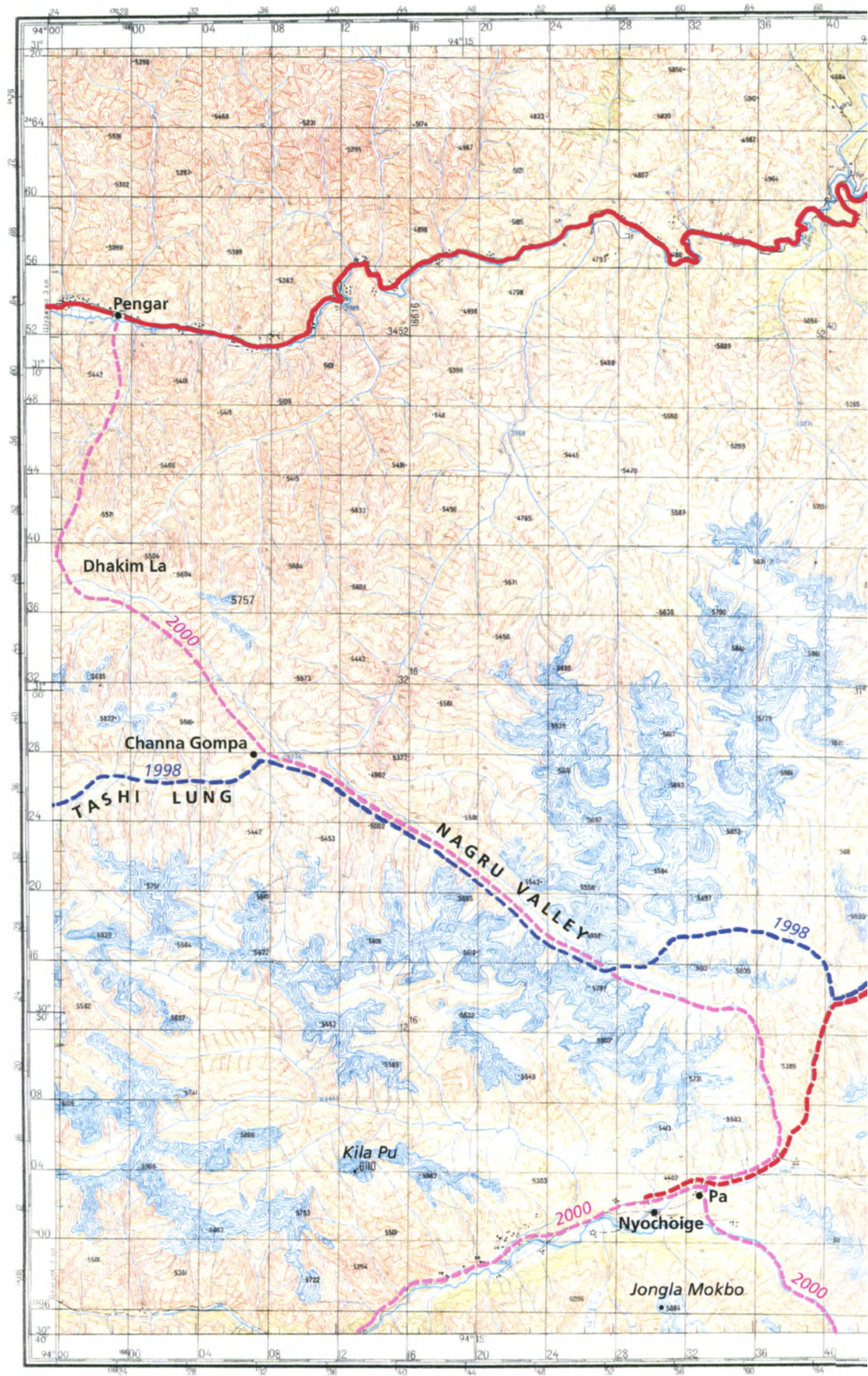








:200 000





**PEMBA**  
From: 08-46-11  
Scale: see co-ordinates

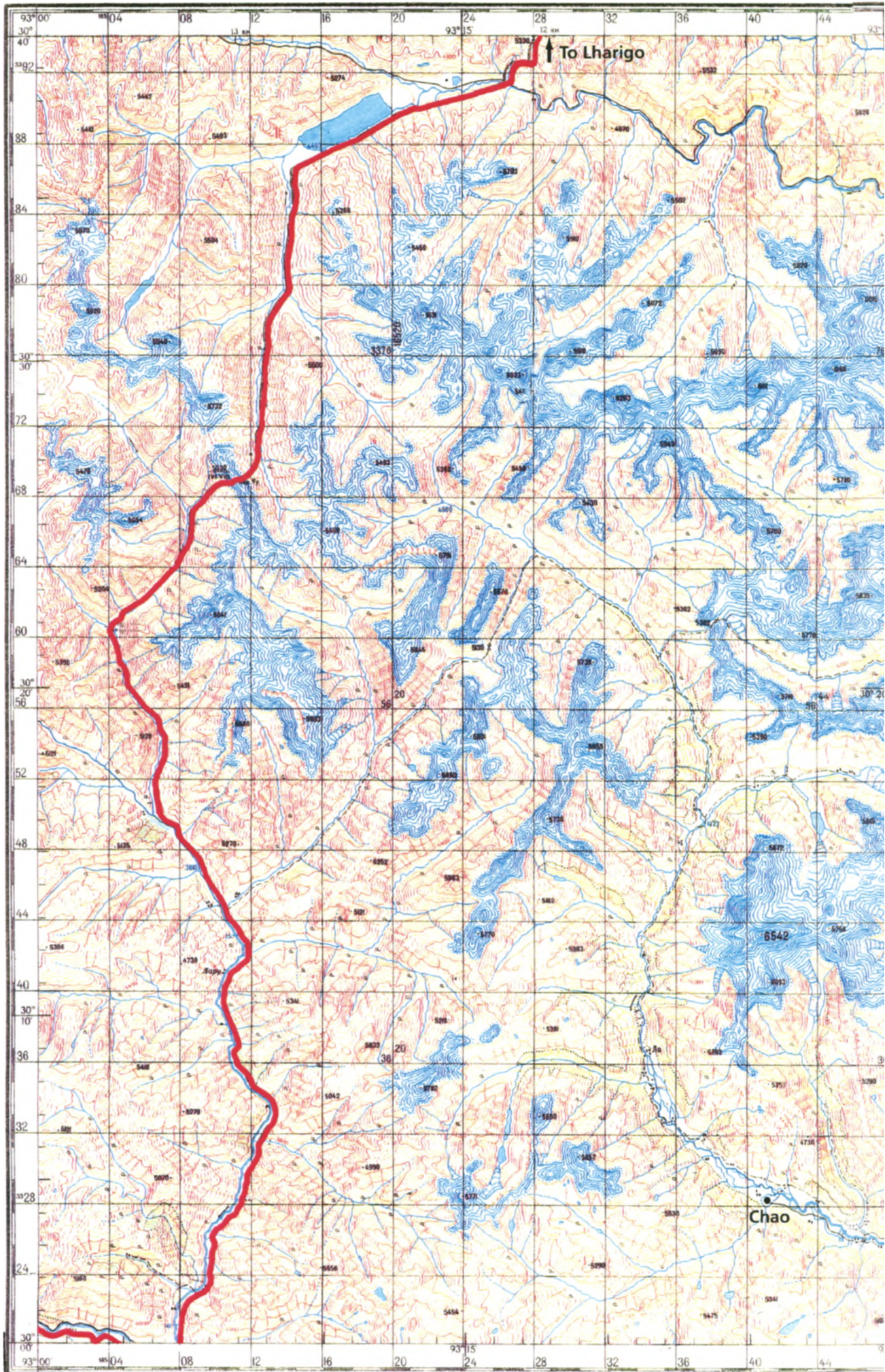
—●— Road

Shargung La

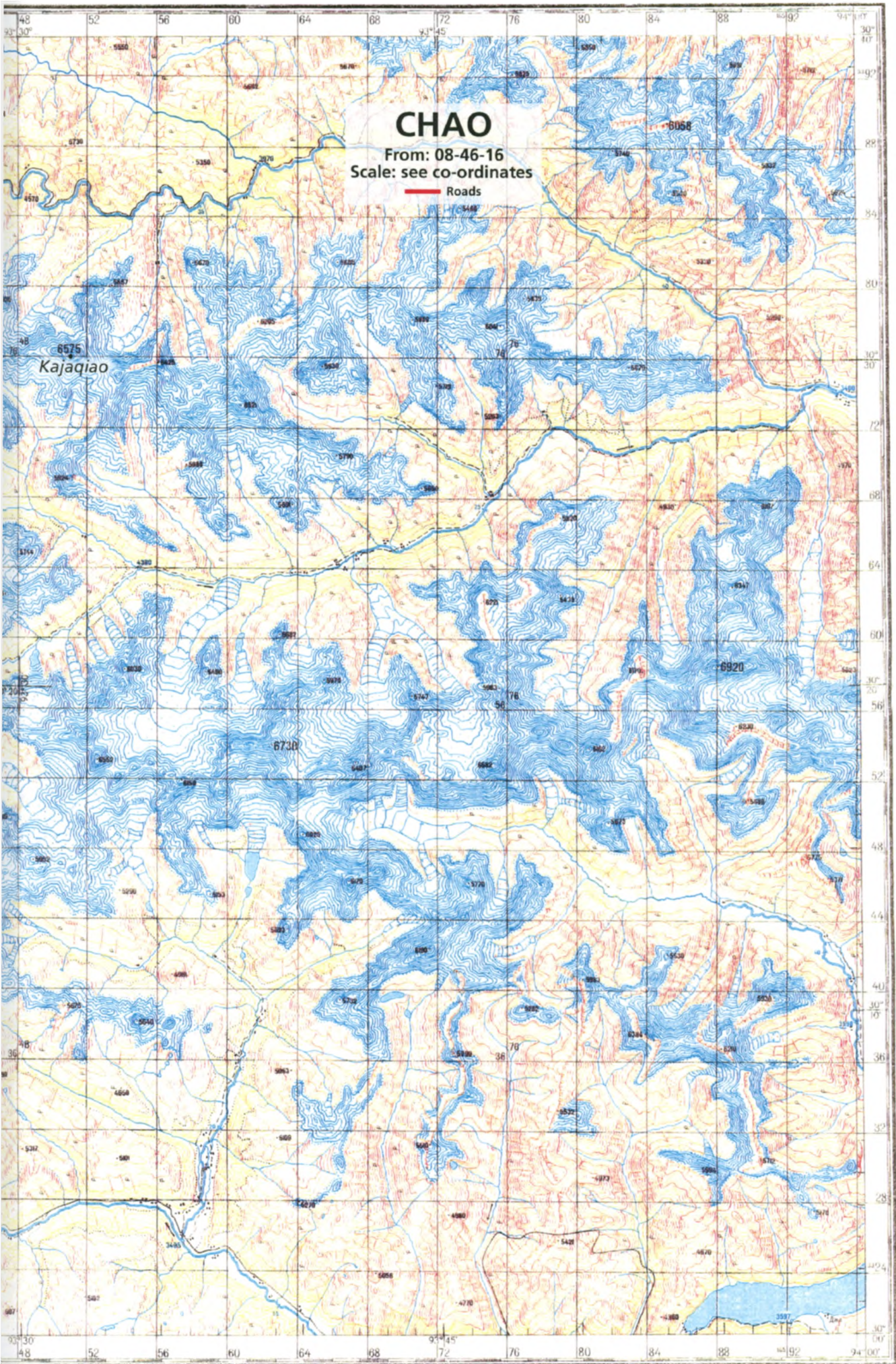
Tsoka

Pemba

To Lharong







# CHAO

From: 08-46-16  
Scale: see co-ordinates

— Roads

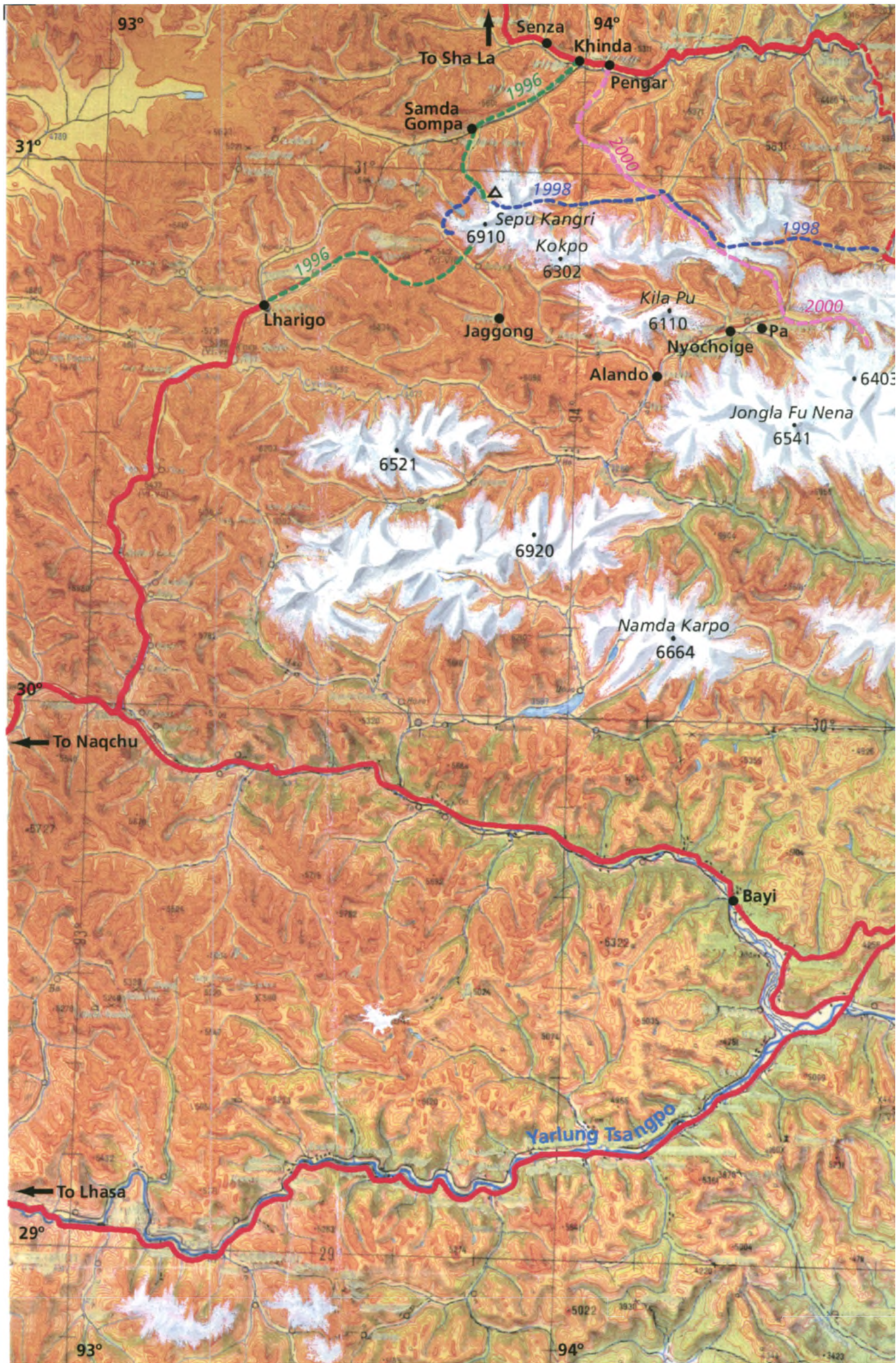
Kajaqiao

6575

6058

8730

6920





## Appendix: Photographs

1. Western approaches: Sepu Kangri 6910m

Elliot Robertson is in the foreground. The summit of Sepu Kangri is the centre of the picture. (*Charles Clarke 1998*)

2. Kokpo massif 6302m

This picture was taken one morning in 1998 as Elliot and I made our way SW up the Tashi Lung valley towards the Sa La. (*Charles Clarke 1998*)

3. Kokpo massif 6302m

View from the summit of *Amchi Inchi-ne* 5850m looking east. Victor Saunders is in foreground. (*Charles Clarke 1998*)

4. Kajaqiao

From *Immortal Mountains in the Snow Region* (azimuth unknown - ? from the south).

5. Jongla Mokbo 5884m

View from the village of Pa. (*Charles Clarke 2000*)

6. Main Jongla Glacier

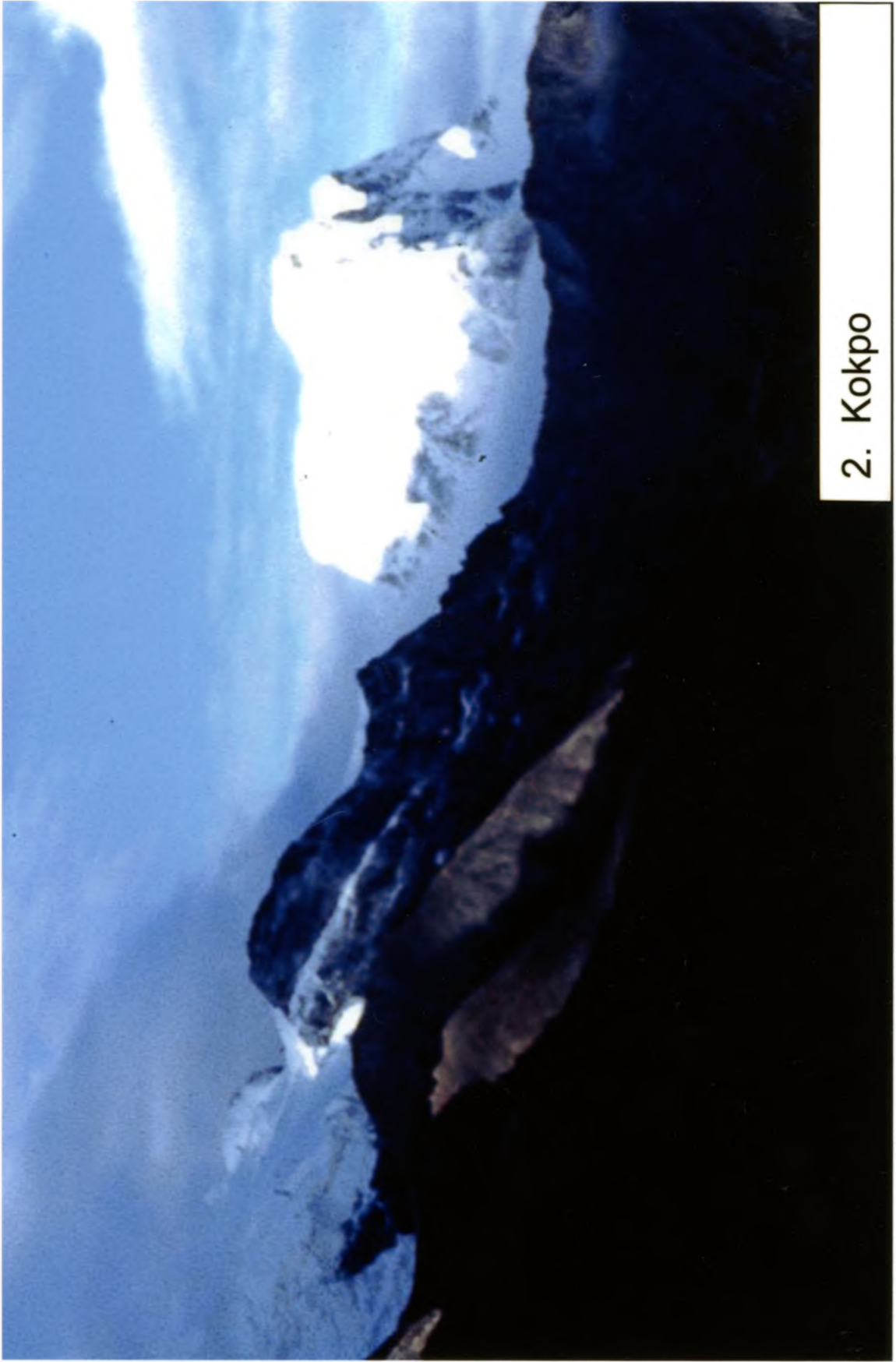
There seemed no apparently easy way to reach the dry glacier beyond the lake. (*Charles Clarke 2000*)

7. Jongla Fu Nena 6541m

From the side valley leading S from the lake in 6. (*Charles Clarke 2000*)



1. Western Approaches: Sepu Kangri



2. Kokpo



3. Kokpo



4. Kajaqiao





5. Jongla Mokbo



6. Main Jongla Glacier



7. Jongla Fu Nena

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*I agree that any or all of this report may be copied for the purposes of private research.*

### Note

Copies of this report, *Tibet's Secret Mountain* and *Immortal Mountains in the Snow Region* are available from Charles Clarke at the address below.



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