BMC

04/43

British Nganglong Kangri Expedition

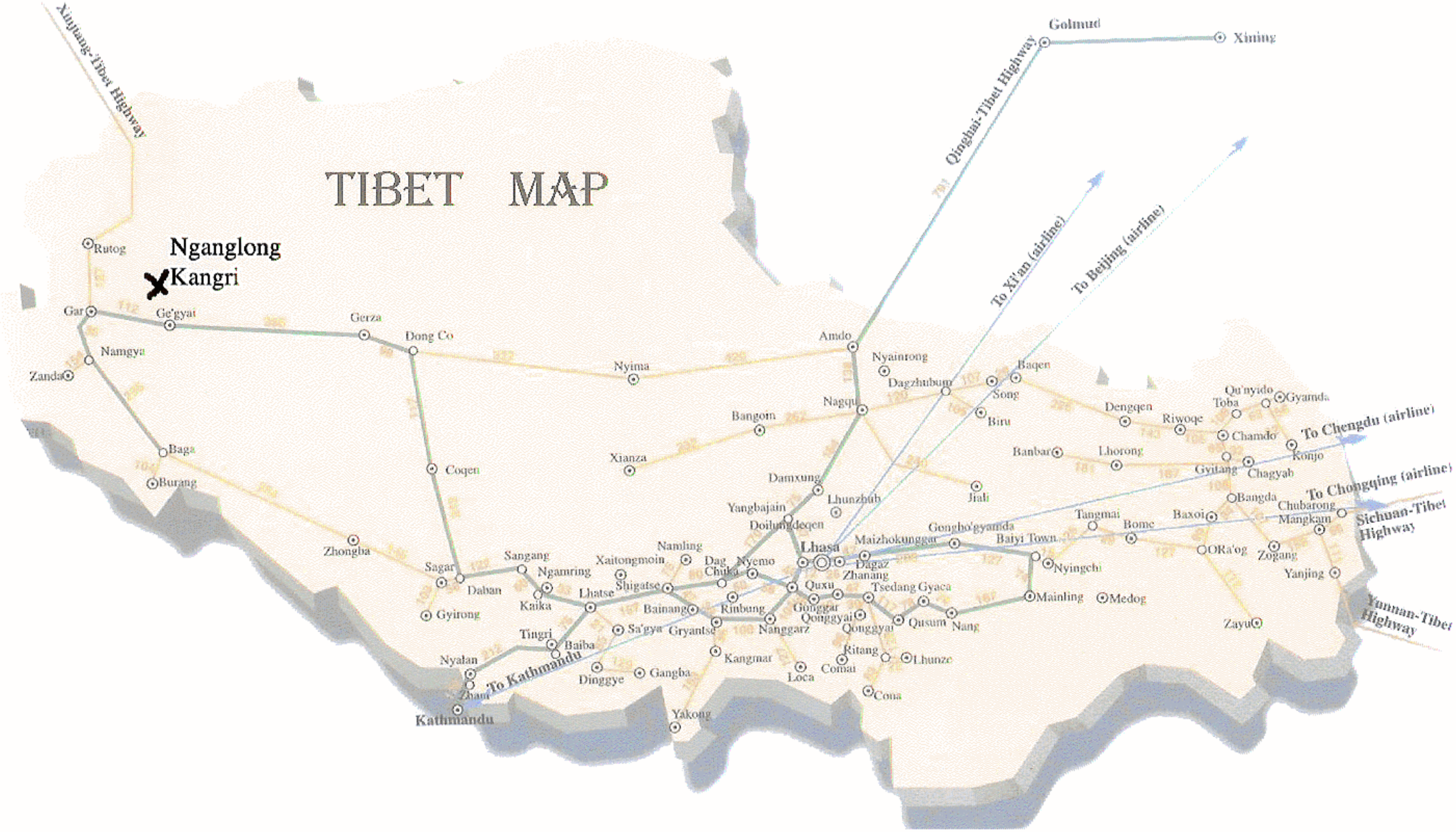
2004

Supported by the Mount Everest Foundation and British Mountaineering Council

Members:

John Town, Derek Buckle, Martin Scott, Toto Gronlund

Location of Nganglong Kangri



Foreword

John Town

Nganglong Kangri lies in the north west of the Tibetan Plateau at 81°00'E 32°49'N, too far from the routes of the classic explorers to feature in the literature, yet standing out on the map as a compact group, the highest peak for a hundred miles in any direction. The mountain is only 45km north of Tibet's northern highway, which crosses the country from Nagchu in the west to Ali in the east. Travellers regularly pass that way, despite the appalling roads.

The mountain was a complete unknown – no visitors, so no photographs and no descriptions. Nonetheless, if it was there, the satellites would have seen it and the Soviet Military have mapped it. Declassified Intelligence Satellite Photography (DISP) images (page 5), taken in the sixties and seventies as part of the Corona programme, have a particular beauty. The black and white photos were taken on film, not video, reflecting the subtle play of light on rocks and water . They showed a mountain range holding around 35 glaciers, with over 40 peaks above 6000m. The 24 by 16 km area was split into two by a deep valley into a smaller southern group and the main northern group. The main group ran east to west, falling very steeply on the northern side into a series of narrow valleys, but sloping gradually to the south and south east in a number of high snowfields and broad glaciers.

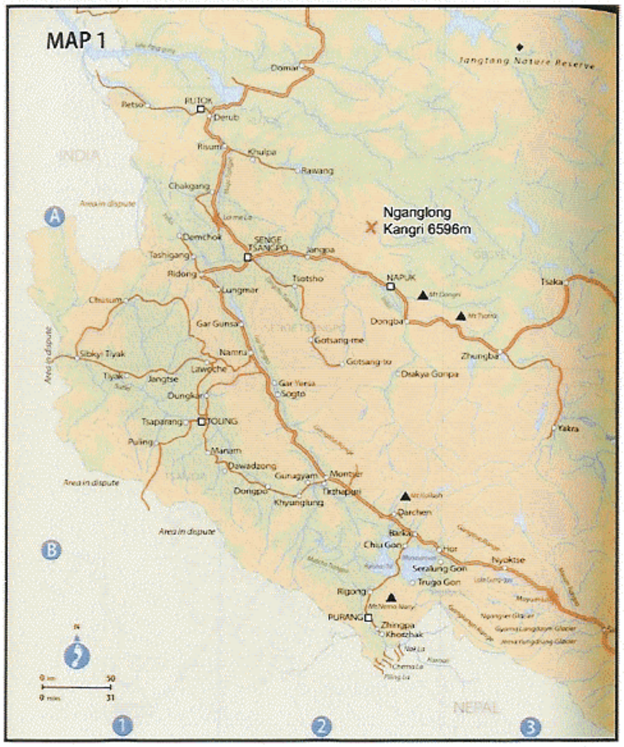
The Chinese give the highest peak as 6,596m. The Soviet map (page 6) showed a peak, 'Aling Kangri 6542m' in about the same location , marked 3 , but also a number of other unnamed peaks of over 6,600m. An analysis of the contours showed the highest to be between 6640m and 6680m, marked 4 . This is the peak known to the locals as Kang Ngolok and refered to below as Nganglong Kangri 1

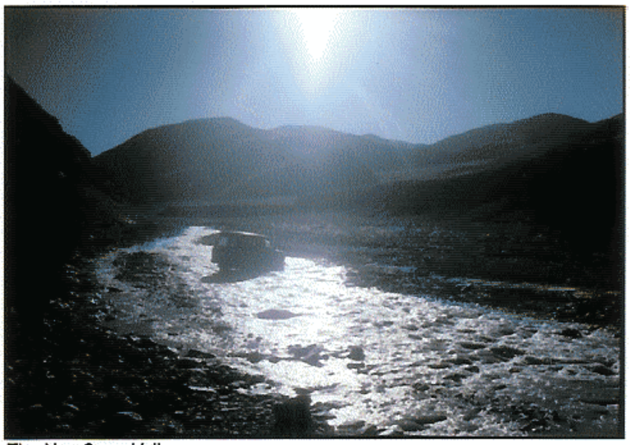
A long valley, marked 1, leading into the south eastern face of the massif, seemed to be the key to our approach The local name, we subsequently discovered, is the Ngo Sang. Relatively gentle slopes at the head of the valley appeared to provide access to a number of the highest peaks. This aspect of the mountain was also closest to civilisation, though we would have to find some way of crossing the 36 kilometres of country between the nearest minor road and a suitable base for the mountain.

The key to this approach appeared to be a low pass, marked 4, leading into the valley from the south, which we later found to be called the Naglung La. It is possible to use computers to program features from maps or satellite photos into Global Positioning System (GPS) units and then use them in the field to navigate a pre-planned route. I hoped we might navigate cross country from the road to the pass and cross into the Ngo Sang (and so it came to pass).

Our preparations also included downloading and examining full scale Landat images of our journey to the mountain. These reinforced the impression that this was going to tough business...

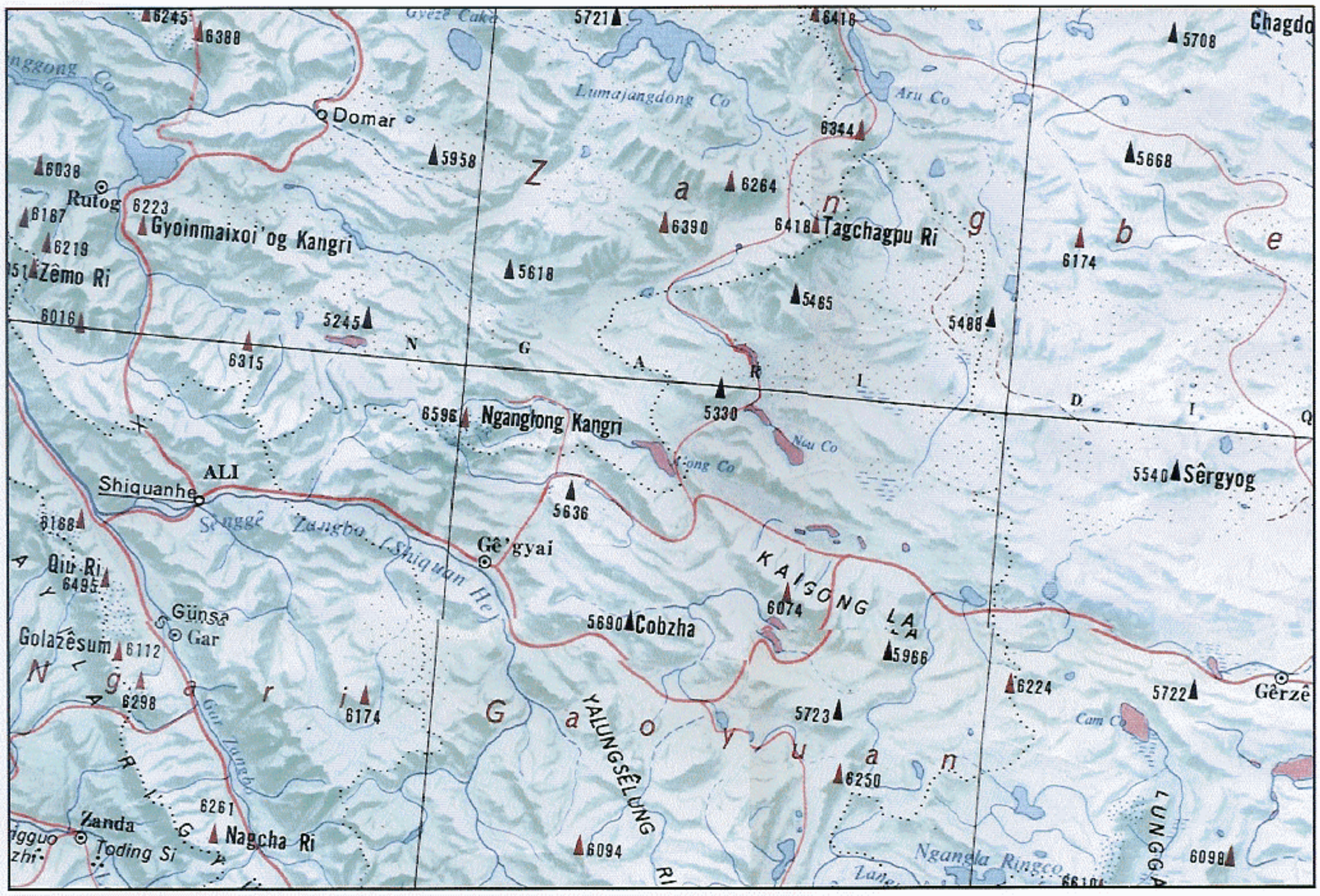
Map from the Footprint Guide to Tibet showing location



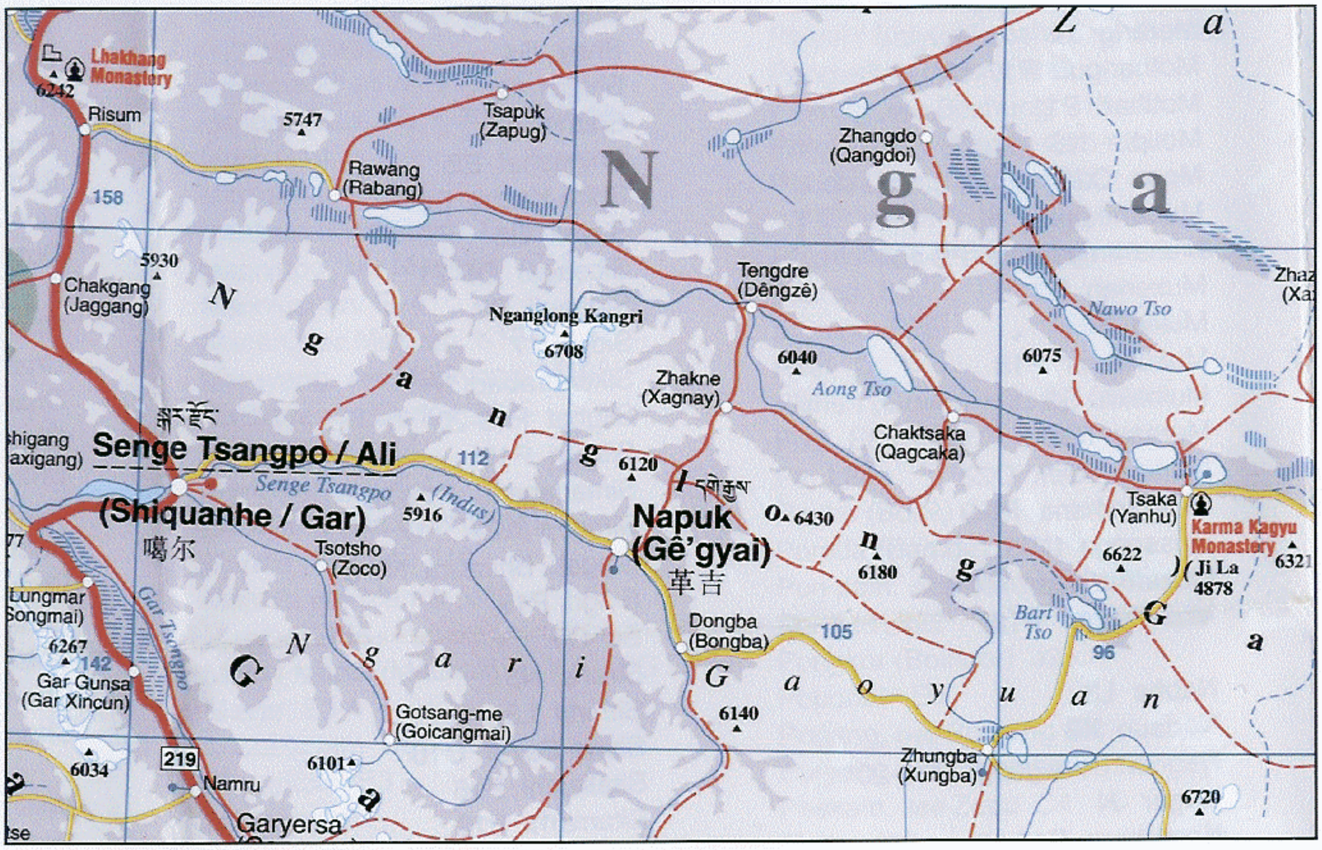


The Ngo Sang Valley

Kyang (Wild Asses) seen from the N Highway



Section from Chinese 1: 2,500,000 Map: 'Mountain Peaks on the Qinghai/Xisang Plateau'



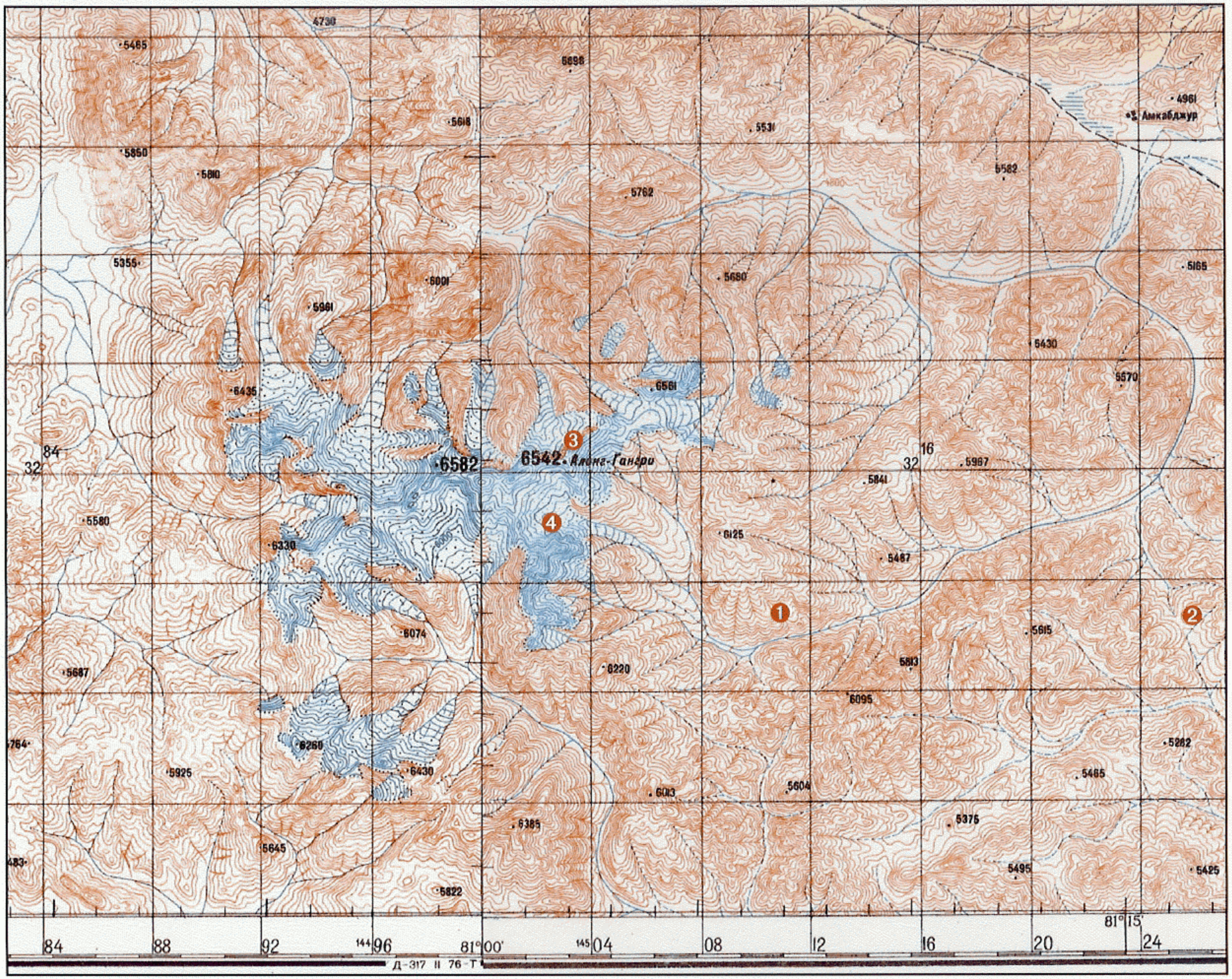
Section from Gizi 1: 2,000,000 Travel Map of Tibet

Intelligence Satellite Image

Declassified intelligence black and white satellite image from the 'Corona' programme of the '60s and '70s. The image has been conputer enhanced. The mountain is marked in red.

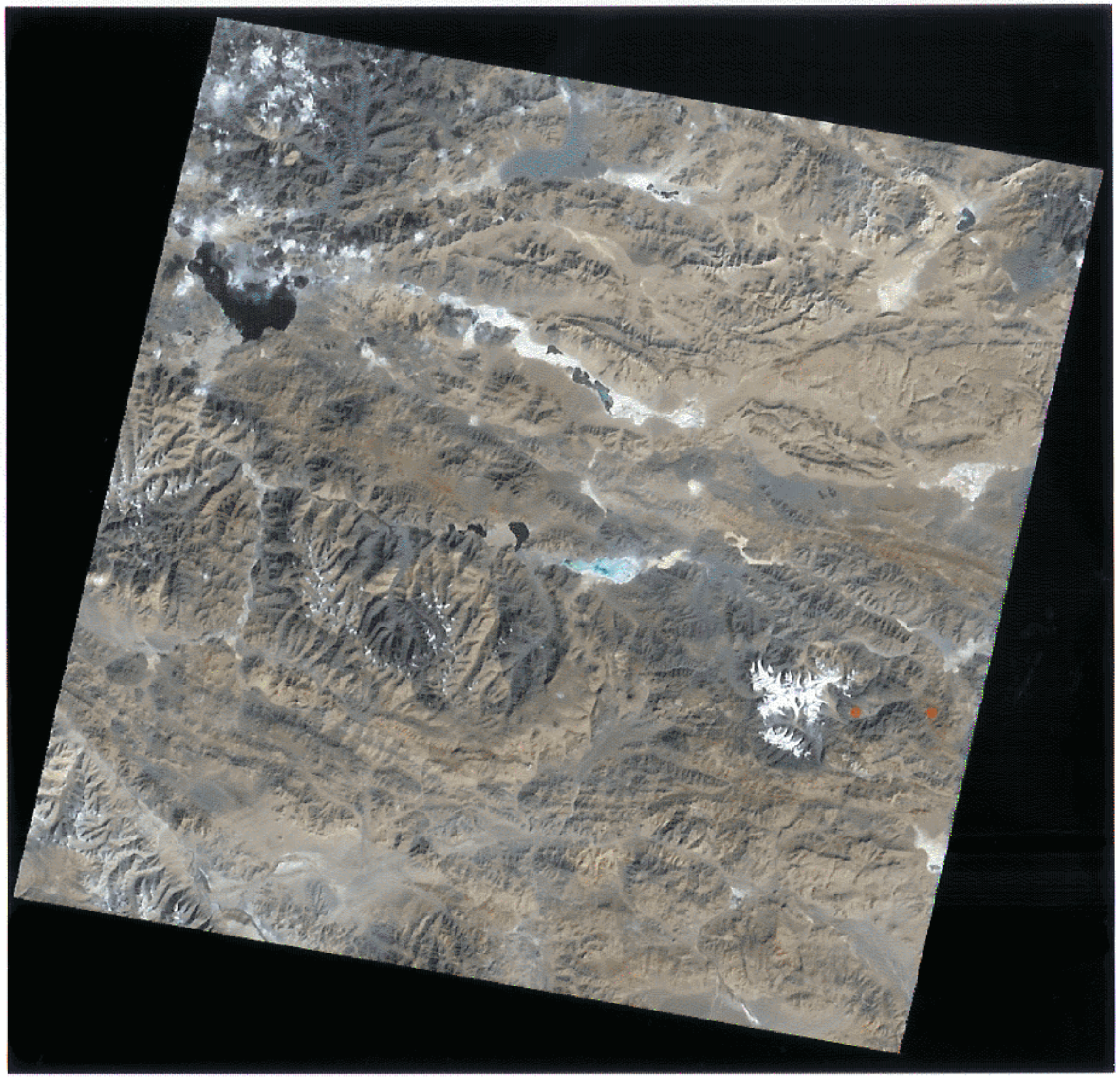
Soviet 1:200K Map

Composite of sections of two Soviet eclassified military maps obtained through Eastview Cartographic, USA



Landsat Image

Landsat is a long running earth imaging programme whose digital images are available commercially, or in the case of this image from the University of Maryland, free. Resolution is lower than that for intelligence satellite images but covers a much larger area. This image shows the whole of one frame, , with Nganglong kangri clearly visible to the lower right. The section containing the mountain can be enlarged to give a similar image to that on the preceding page, though the video sensors on landsat do not provide as subtle rendering of glaciated areas as the photographic film used for the Corona intelligence satellite images.



GRANT APPLICATION FORM

The application will only be accepted as a hard copy of this form (or a same sized photocopy). If the form is sent by FAX, hard copies must follow by post immediately. **Please type all applications and keep strictly to three pages (plus the fourth page appendix for scientific expeditions). Deviations from this or applications sent electronically will not be accepted**. Provision of adequate detail may make an interview unnecessary, although in general the MEF wants to see all first time leaders.

1. Name of Expedition: **British Nganglong Kangri Expedition**

Leader's details.

Name: John Town

Address: 146 Melton Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 6ER

Telephone number (day): 01509 222223

Telephone number (evening): 0115 923 3421

FAX: 01509 223900

Email: j.m.town@lboro.ac.uk

2. Country and region to be visited: Western Tibet – Ngari Province - Rutok County

Objectives: Exploration and First Ascent of Nganglong Kangri 6596m

Duration (from-to): 21st August to 19th September 2004

3. Expedition Members. Give name, age, nationality, occupation and relevant experience of each member.

John Town, 51, British, University Administrator. Alpine Club. Climbing experience in the Alps; Himalayas; Caucasus; USA; Bolivia; Siberian Altai - first Brit. asc. highest pk., Bielukha 4506m; Tibet - led first British Expedition to Amne Machin which made first ascent of Amne Machin IX, 5690m; - first West. Expedition Jomo Gangtse 7048m; - first ascent Machag 6000m; - exploration of Wortse Chu & Nye valleys, Upper Kong-po/Lhari; first ascent Beu-tse 6270m Central Tibet. Mongolia - first West. asc. Muhkhairkhan 4204m; Kamchatka - first Brit. asc. highest pk., Kliuchevskaya 4800m. Yulong Shan, Yunnan - attempt on Satseto. Represented BMC on International Meet, Ararat, Winter 86

Derek Buckle, 59, British. Consultant Research Chemist. Alpine Club. Climbing experience in the Alps; Himalayas; Caucasus; Canada; and South America; Numerous first ascents in Greenland. Tibet - first ascent Machag 6000m, Jomo Gangtse area, - exploration of Wortse Chu area, Upper Kong-po - first ascent Beu-tse 6270m Central Tibet. Caucasus - first British ascent, Chatyn Tau, Central Caucasus,

Possible third member, dependent on availability:
Martin Scott, 50s, British. Alpine Club. Alpine experience world-wide, including Nepal Himalaya, numerous first ascents in Greenland and first ascent Beu-tse 6270m Central Tibet.

4. Budget

Expedition Costs:		Expedition Income:	
Travel -	£2,010	Number of Members -	3
Food and Stores -	£600	Amount of Personal Contributions -	£3,000
Peak Fees and Liaison Officer)-	£9,000	Please give details of grants	
Hire of Labour -)		already approved -	none
Insurance - £375		Other sources - £300	
Other and contingency -	£1,500		
TOTAL:	£13,485	TOTAL:	£9,300

5. To what organisations or sponsors have you applied for grants and with what results so far?

M.E.F/B.M.C only

If you wish to be considered for a BMC, MC of S or SC for W place a cross in the appropriate box.

BMC X MC of S SC for W

When do you expect a decision? Agents confirmation expected by start of April 2004

7. Whom have you consulted about the expedition?

I have talked and corresponded with others who have travelled in the remoter areas ofTibet.

8. Give names, addresses and Email addresses if available of two referees who can supply details concerning the general standing and objectives of the expedition and its members (questionnaire proforma follows). Referees should not be members of either the MEF Screening or Management Committees.

Mr John Temple, Lockhurst Farm, Four Elms, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6LU

Mr Miles Hillman, Providence House, 28 Croft Road, Cosby, Leics

9. Name of the bank account to which the grant should be paid:

a/c Mr J.M.Town, 80625957, sort code 40-47-80, First Direct, 40 Wakefield Road, Leeds
Grant cheques will be sent direct to the leader once the conditions under which the grant was offered have been accepted and a copy of the permit provided to the MEF.

10. Grants are awarded on the understanding that you have obtained and will comply with the latest regulations of the country to be visited. Information on expedition fees and regulations can be obtained directly from the MEF website http://www.mef.org.uk. (Scientific expeditions must also complete Section C of the Appendix.)

Which Ministry, Embassy or Tourist Department have you contacted?
Chinese Embassy

What arrangements are being made for local employees and have you provided for their compensation in case of mishap?
covered by local agency
The MEF cannot provide assistance for expeditions that run in to financial difficulty and you should therefore consider what support you could call upon in an emergency, since financial insolvency could damage the reputation of British mountaineering and harm future expeditions. Can you call on financial reserves in case of an emergency?
yes

Where applicable, have allowances been made for the deposit of money with (1) the customs authorities against import of equipment and (2) the Ministry against rescue expenses and an environmental bond?

not necessary/ no rescue services or environmental bond

11. State what plans and experience you have to enable you to cope in the event of an accident or illness during the trip.

No real possibility of rescue above snowline. Evacuation of casualties from Base Camp would be dependent help from local nomads and proximity of nearest road (unknown but likely 0 to 3 days travel). Satellite phone would help. A large town, Ali, is within one day's drive on bad roads but has no air service. I suspect the PLA have means of getting in and out by air. Facilities for helicopter rescue do not appear to exist in Tibet. We are trained in providing basic medical care, carry a full medical kit and have extensive experience of operating in such situations.

12. What steps have been made to research the area to be visited, in particular its geography, political situation and previous exploratory mountaineering or scientific work in your chosen field? For primarily scientific expeditions, list up to 4 key publications, maps or other materials used to develop your scientific objectives.

I have checked all the literature and have not found any records or accounts of expeditions to this massif, or any photographs. It is mentioned in passing in a number of general guides but nobody recounts having seen it. I have visited Tibet on many occasions including 2003, but far west Tibet is a new area. It is visited by backpackers and tourists in small numbers and is sensitive politically, though no more so than many other border areas. There as evidently been considerable development of the towns in recent years with improvement of facilities. These peaks do not lie in a disputed zone and are some distance from the border.

Have your plans been discussed with any relevant scientific bodies?
no

Apart from the Expedition Report, what plans do you have to disseminate and/or publish the results of the expedition?

I will submit an article to the Alpine Journal.

14. Please describe your project as fully as possible, in particular outlining any innovative features. Please provide at least one map and photograph of your objective. The Screening Committee will want to see additional maps and photographs if or when you come for interview.

This is really an exploratory venture in terms of how little is known about the peaks. We know this massif is there because it is marked on Chinese maps and shows up prominently on Landsat images. The satellite pictures show it as a compact massif about 40 by 30km, with a number of deep valleys cutting in from the N, E and S, some of which hold sizeable glaciers. The map and satellite photo give an idea of the location of the highest peak but we will need to obtain Russian military maps to clarify. One of the main roads in the area runs E-W to the S of the massif, about 40 km away. One guidebook sketch map shows a minor road running E-W about 10 km to the N of the peaks, from Tsaka to Risum, via Rawang, which may service local salt mines. Another map (Mountains of Tibet/Chinghai Plateau attached) shows a track running N from Gegye (Napuk) into the E-W valley to the immediate S of the massif and then turning E to Tsaka. A side branch of this runs N over the massif's E flanks and round W into its N valleys. This is probably part of the Tsaka to Risum road already noted and will form our first line of attack if it fits with local advice.

The area is 4 to 5 days drive from Lhasa, and 3 to 4 days from the road border with Nepal, which is probably how we will enter the country. The travelling is all on rough roads and at altitudes of above 4000m. The region can also be reached from in 3 to 4 days from Kashgar in Sinkiang , though sometimes it takes up to a week. The few past expeditions to NW Tibet have found getting to the mountain to be more than half the battle.

15. Declaration

The information submitted in this application is, to the best of my knowledge, correct at the time this application was made. Should any significant developments arise after this application is made, such as change of team members or official permits being refused, I will keep the MEF informed of such developments. I have informed my two referees that their statements should be returned directly to the MEF. Should this expedition be cancelled or postponed subsequent to receiving support from the MEF, I will return the grant awarded.

I also acknowledge that:

1. Expedition members are not seeking advice from the MEF or BMC regarding their approach to and choice of mountain venue.

2. All discussion with MEF/BMC personnel is in the context of those bodies making an assessment of the merits of the expedition and suitability for grant aid.

3. Any information regarding the expedition venue provided by the MEF/BMC personnel in the course of discussion, is historical and derived either from personal observation or anecdotal evidence and is not definitive.

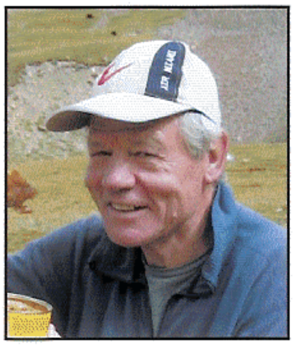
4. Expedition members will rely upon their own judgement at all times whilst on or approaching the mountain venue.

Latest Version of Application Form (rev. 02 April 2003)

Signed.. Date.............................

John Town

Derek Buckle



Martin Scott

Toto Gronlund

An Account of the Expedition

Derek Buckle

Photos by Martin Scott unless otherwise credited

Climbing in Tibet was beginning to take on the character of an annual event, but then it does have what is probably the highest concentration of unclimbed 6,000m peaks anywhere in the world. This year we had our sights on one of the highest unclimbed peaks to the west, near the town of Ali and the holy mountain Kailas on the Indian border. No photographs were available for our chosen peak, Nganglong Kangri, but satellite pictures of the massif were available from the US Geological Survey and the Chinese Mountaineering Association listed its height and coordinates in their Guide to Mountaineering in China. With one month available to us we hoped to both reconnoitre the major peak and make the first ascent.

Once again a question mark arose over whether we would be able to fly to Kathmandu on our scheduled date of the 28th August. Maoists had blockaded the city and the Foreign Office had posted warnings. Our plan this year was to travel overland from Nepal to Tibet via the Friendship Highway, so access in and out of Kathmandu was central to its success. Last year it was an outbreak of SARS in China that prevented us flying to Lhasa at our preferred time of May; this year we wondered whether troubles in Nepal would confound us.

With these questions clouding our final arrangements in the UK we kept a close eye on events in and around Kathmandu. Fortunately, three days before we were due to leave, hardship and political resistance to the Maoist blockade resulted in it being lifted and our prospects for a trouble-free trip improved markedly. We duly arrived at Tribhuvan Airport to be met by Migma of China International Travel who whisked us away to our hotel in Thamel. Usually a bustling community, Thamel was relatively devoid of tourists; populated only by a few resilient Italians and Eastern Europeans. Our custom in the shops was enthusiastically courted as we purchased last minute supplies and replacements for forgotten essentials.

Zhangmu

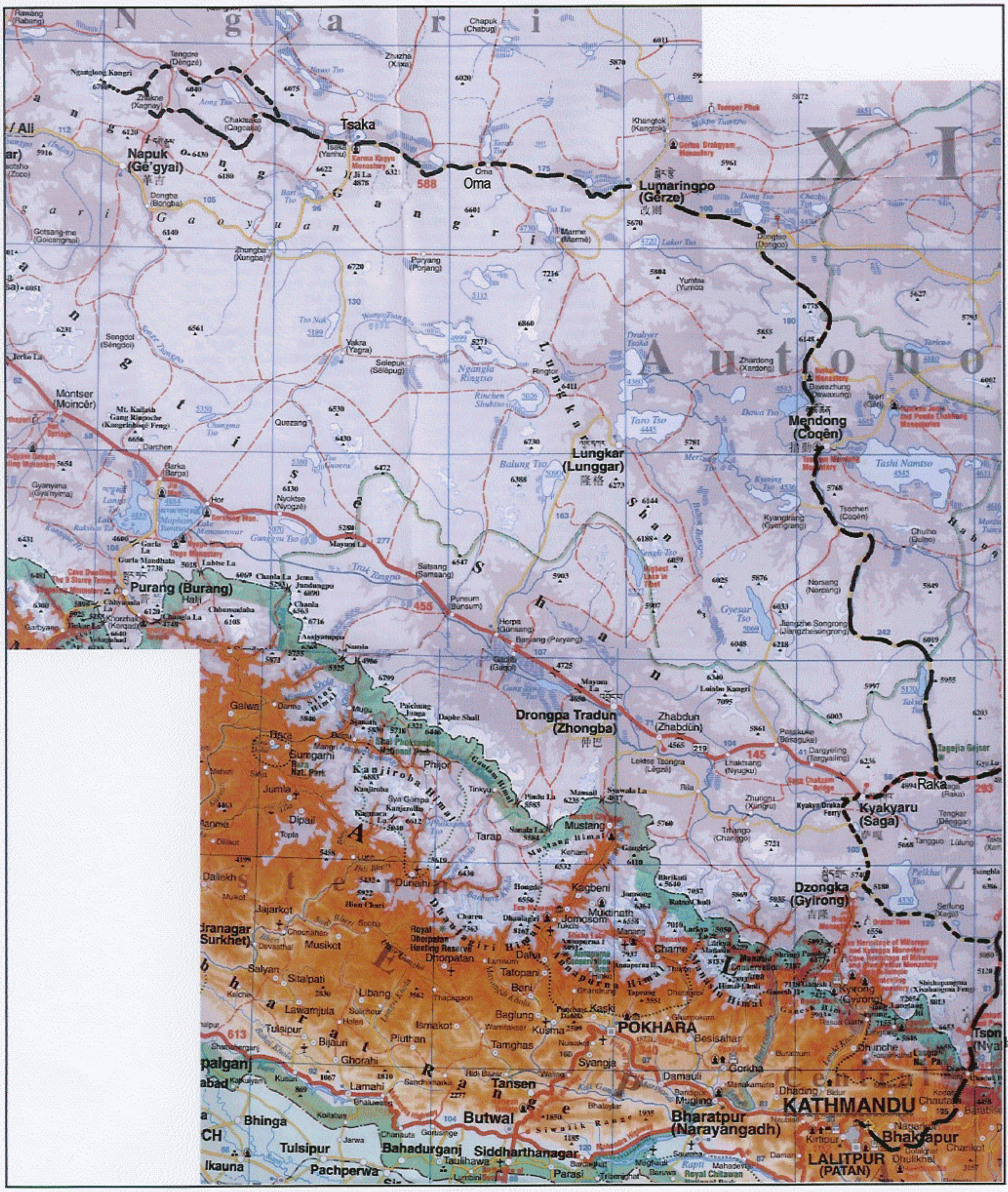
Unfortunately the calm was a transient affair. The murder of 12 Nepalese in Iraq caused murmurings of disquiet on our last evening in Kathmandu and was followed by a riot and imposed curfew on the day that we left. Vengeance was exacted on the Muslim community by an attack on the main mosque and the destruction of the Qatar Airlines office. We were well on our way north by this time, however, although we still faced delays caused by a major landslide and a Maoist demonstration before we finally reached the border at Kodari.

At the Friendship Bridge we rendezvoused with two Land Cruisers that were to take our party of four as far as Base Camp (BC) in the Nganglong Kangri range. It was here that we met some of our Tibetan contingent; Pasang, the liaison officer and two of the drivers, Dawa and Lapka. At this stage it was not clear how close to our target the vehicles would be able to get. One thing was certain, that night we would get no further than Zhangmu.

With the Yarlung Tsangpo in full spate the primitive ferry at Saga was not running. It was therefore to be a dusty and uncomfortable ride of some 1,400km before finally leaving the rough northern road used by pilgrims to access Kailas. At least we benefited from the constant temporary repairs on this route, which was more than could be said of the southern road even though this was indicated on maps as the major route to Ali. From our experience to the north the road to the south must have been diabolical!

Landslide on the road to the Border

After Zhangmu we travelled only as far as Nyalam since at 3,780m it was the first time that we had reached a significant height and the effects of altitude were being felt. The town has no claim to architectural beauty, but it does serve as a starting point for Shisha Pangma and is a popular overnight stop for pilgrims travelling to Kailash. Because of the latter it was a bad night. Apart from constant shouting from the other incumbents, and regular frantic knocks on our door by their guides, nagging headaches were beginning to take their toll. Grateful to leave the next morning we visited the cave of the Buddhist mystic, Milarepa, before crossing over a number of 5,000m passes on route to Lhatse. Here we joined the lorry that was to carry our provisions, and Kusang, our cook. Unfortunately, even the impressive views of Shisha Pangma and Cho Oyu did little to ease the now prominent discomfort of several members of the team.



from	to	km
Kathmandu	Nyalam	167
Nyalam	Lhatse	288
Lhatse	Raka	235
Raka	Tsochen (Coqen)	240
Tsochen (Coqen)	N Highway	173

from	to	km
N Highway	Gerze	84
Gerze	Tsaka	169
Tsaka	Roadhead	130
Roadhead	Base Camp	32
		1518

Shahkangsham

From Lhatse the road deteriorated as we climbed higher on the Tibetan plateau. From here we would not descend much below 4,500m until our return and our aggressive acclimatisation schedule was becoming more obvious. It was another three nights before we were within range of Nganglong Kangri, but not before passing Raka hot springs, and the extensive salt lakes around Tsaka, not to mention a number of high peaks to either side of the road. The Shahkangsham massif north of Tsochen and towering over 6,800m was particularly impressive (above). Apart from the widely spaced larger towns, accommodation was scarce on this route, but camping opportunities were possible near occasional streams or springs.

Beyond the hamlet of Zhakne we were able to cross a high pass that gave access to the convoluted, sparsely populated valleys to the south of Nganglong Kangri. Fortunately it was possible to take both the Land Cruisers and supply lorry some distance up the broad dominant valley until it narrowed to a stony gorge, although the journey held a fair degree of excitement for passengers and drivers alike. We eventually established BC just below the gorge at a height of almost 5,000m. Testament to the remoteness of this area we had seen several herds of gazelles, deer and wild asses during our journey, in addition to isolated groups of black headed cranes, hares and red fox. Moreover, close to base camp we were lucky to observe rare herds of wild yaks as well as a majestic lone black Tibetan wolf. It was fortunate that this wolf chose to cross our path from the right to the left since Tibetan folklore predicts that this is an omen of good luck. While many of these wild animals do fall prey to heavily armed Chinese militia they are undisturbed by the local nomads that traverse the area.

Twelve days after leaving the UK we were in a position to explore further up the base camp valley in the hope of finding a viable route

First view from the South (JMT)

to the Nganglong Kangri massive. A well-defined animal track led up the true right of the gorge giving easy access to a more complex valley system descending from Nganglong Kangri itself, although some interesting river crossings were experienced before this better alternative was found. At this junction we gained our first real glimpse of the south face of our supposed target (see photo below left), even though it was not possible to view the extent of the range. Importantly we identified a potential site for advance base camp (ABC) on a grassy spur at the convergence of two major rivers flowing in a south-easterly direction from the massif. At only 5,257m the proposed site of ABC was not as high as we would have liked, but it was some 8km from BC and we still had to resolve the problem of how to ferry supplies between the two.

Back at BC we discussed the options. Having spent so long getting

Zhakne

Base Camp (centre) (JMT)

to the area time was now at a premium. Nganglong Kangri was also still some way off. It seemed that we should have to waive the normal acclimatisation rules and move camps up the mountain as fast as we were able, hoping to take advantage of the continuing excellent weather. Stocking ABC was the first priority, particularly since animals were not available and the vehicles could go no further without significant risk of damage. Pasang saved the day by suggesting that he, Kusang and Pubu would porter equipment for us, certainly well beyond the normal call of duty!

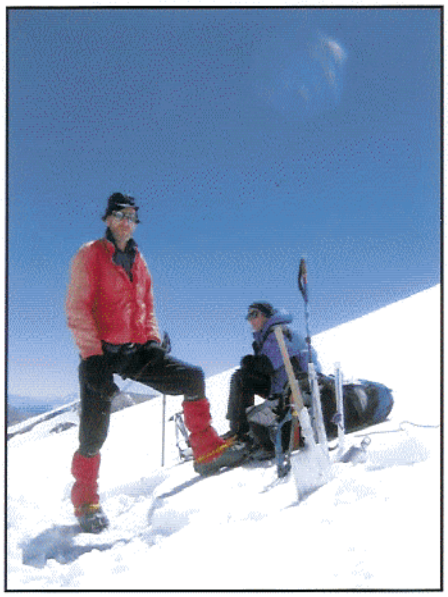
With this solution we moved to ABC the following day. Having little time to spare, Toto and Derek pressed on the next day with the dual aim of transporting supplies needed for higher camps and the hope of locating a suitable site for Camp 1. On the dry arid slopes, however,

Advance Base Camp (JMT)

finding a good water supply was a major problem. A potential site was eventually found on a rocky promontory at 5,775m, some way above the southern glacier snout. While more appropriate for a bivouac, construction work should adapt the site to take a tent. Supplies were stashed before descending to ABC. The eventual plan was not ideal, however, and at this point John decided that he would explore the region in preference to climbing. Derek, Martin and Toto The three others chose to press on with the summit attempt the following day.

The Ascent of Nganglong Kangri I and East Peak

To accommodate the change in plan only a single two-man tent would now be available for higher camps. It would be cramped, but this would be offset by carrying less weight. After readjusting kit, a move was made to establish and occupy Camp 1. A few hours labouring were eventually rewarded by a flattish area just large enough to accommodate the tent. Superb views compensated somewhat for the cramped conditions in the tent, but it was just as well that we planned to keep our nights spent above ABC to a minimum. There were some mumblings from Toto about sleeping between two express trains, but she resolved this dilemma by choosing to sleep opposed with her head noticeably downwards. A route to the summit by way of the SE glacier looked feasible from here, assuming of course that an easy route off descent from the moraine on which we were camped was possible. We hoped to achieve this using only one additional camp.

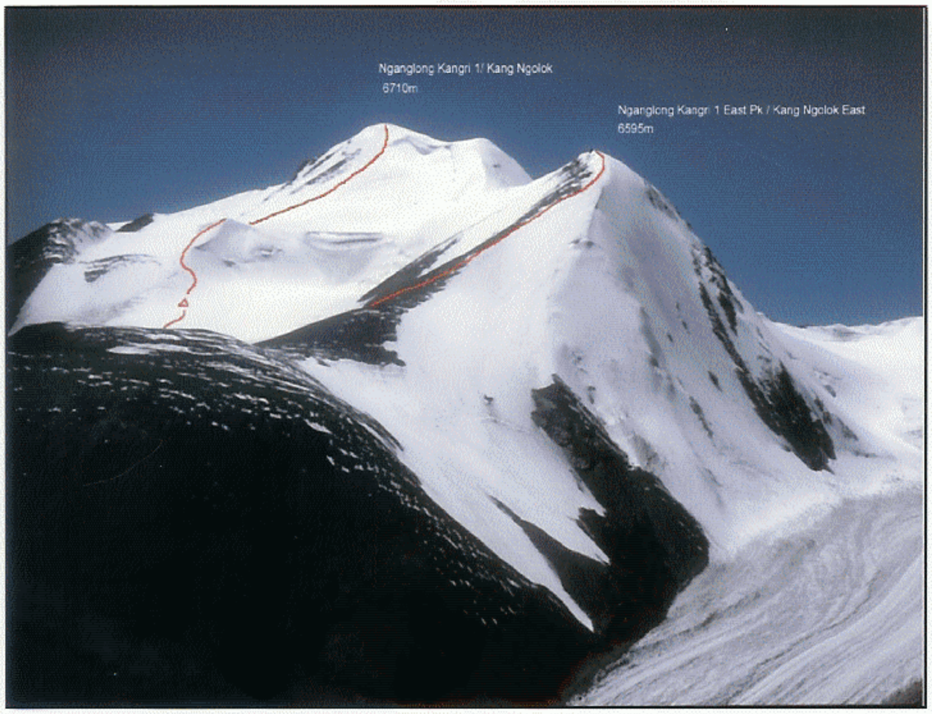


In continuing perfect weather we carried supplies further up the mountain the following day by climbing first over the lateral moraine and then taking an easy rising traverse over the glacier to where it steepened. Surprisingly, there were no major crevasses on this glacier, allowing us to site Camp 2 just below the first of a series of small snow domes at 6,200m. After stashing the supplies we briefly explored the way ahead before returning. Leaving ice axes, rope and crampons near the top of the moraine we then returned to Camp 1 just in time to make contact with Pasang, who had walked the 6km from BC to get the line-of-sight necessary for the effective use of our radios.

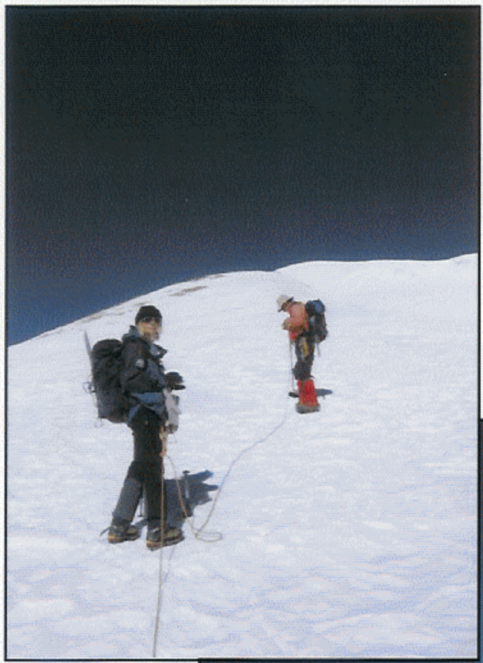
Relocating to Camp 2 the next day was purgatory. Our acclimatisation schedule was taking its toll and we had very heavy excessive loads. In staccato fashion we finally we arrived and immediately set about digging a suitable platform for the tent. Upward views were restricted from here, but that to the view south was extensive. It was somewhere in that direction that we understood John to be. Despite universal lethargy we started on numerous brews in an endeavour to rehydrate. At the designated time, radio contact was again made with Pasang, although this time because of our position he was unable to see the tent. From him we learned that John had climbed high on the neighbouring peak to the SE from where he had gained a broad perspective of the Nganglong Kangri range. At this point we had no inkling of the terrain beyond the peaks immediately north of where we were. Moreover, it was still unclear which of the many visible peaks was dominant in the group. Nevertheless, yet we considered that it would be possible to climb to a small col separating the two immediate summits before traversing left or right to the higher of the two tops believed to be the higher. The proposed route climbed over several snow domes before tackling what appeared to be a ramp on the SE Face.

Continuing with our established schedule we planned a summit bid the following day. All good intentions of an early start were put on hold, however, when we had trouble lighting the stove in the predawn cold. Rewarming was the first priority if frost bite was

Camp 2



to be avoided so it was not until almost 10.00 that we eventually left the camp. At around 6,600m we stopped on a small mound to reassess the way forward. The right facing 'ramp' was still the preferred option, although it was evident that several alternatives existed. Perhaps predictably, the 'ramp' was not as it appeared since one prod with an axe quickly revealed a massive void. Understandably we chose the steep face to its left which led easily to the summit ridge. At this point it was clear that the left top was the highest point on this ridge and a short while later we were on a broad plateau with no further climbing to do. At 6,710m, we were on top of Nganglong Kangri having accomplished its first ascent. Apart from an overenthusiastic victory hug from Derek, that managed to dislodge one of Toto's



front teeth, the summit mood was ecstatic.

From this viewpoint the full extent of the range was evident. An extensive glacier system separated us from a second major peak to the north that appeared to be of similar height to ourselves. All other peaks were substantially smaller. Subsequent detailed review of both satellite and terrestrial maps, in combination with the visual perspective seen by John, suggested that we were indeed at the highest point, but only an ascent of the more northerly peak would establish this fact unequivocally. On account of the multiplicity of summits in the Nganglong Kangri range we chose to call the 6,710m peak Nganglong Kangri I.

Radio contact with Pasang was established while we were still enjoying the summit view and it later transpired that he had seen us descending shortly after. Descending by the approximate route of ascent, our speed back to Camp 2 was rapid, arriving exhausted but elated at 17.15. With the weather still fine and stable the question now arose as what to do next. While it was clearly too far to attempt the most northerly peak, that to the east of Nganglong Kangri I looked eminently feasible. Climbing this peak would have the added advantage of providing an alternative perspective of the whole range.

With a decision made, we dismantled camp the next day, with Martin planning to descend to ABC while Toto and Derek would attempt the eastern peak. By adopting this strategy our loads were horrific when we eventually left around 11.15. We struggled down across the glacier to the lateral moraine where a dump of unnecessary equipment and food was made before climbing the steep scree onto the dominant, but easy, SE Ridge of our chosen the east peak. Martin meanwhile continued down, bowed down by his huge rucksack. A prominent rock outcrop dominated the lower part of the ridge from where it was possible either to attempt complete the ascent on virtually continuous scree or climb the left hand face of the ice-field to its right. Climbing the scree was like akin to ascending a descending escalator, and this approach was quickly abandoned. The ice-field alternative was a comparative delight, although our speed after the exertions of the previous seven days was unlikely to break any records. Travelling unroped we eventually struck the ridge leading to the compact rocky summit and it was not until here that where the full panorama of the Nganglong Kangri range opened out. At 6,595m, Nganglong Kangri II*, as we christened it, appeared the third highest peak in the range and afforded tremendous views of Nganglong Kangri I and the peaks to the north. Following a more gentlemanly victory hug this time a fast and easy descent was made down the scree, taking about 20 minutes in total to the stash.

After retrieving the additional gear, an arduous descent was then made to Camp 1, where an additional pile awaited collection. Since the intention was to carry on to ABC the time had clearly come to burn all unwanted items if we were to avoid a return to Camp 1 the following day. Even when this was completed, however, the loads were unpleasantly heavy. Toto's 'sack looked like a Christmas tree it had so many items hanging from it. A normally 90 minute descent seemed to take forever, but at 19.30 we staggered into ABC, where Martin was

East Peak of Nganglong Kangri I (JMT)

** This is shown on the map and in picture tiitles as the East Peak of Nganglong Kangri I. The main peaks of the massif have been numbered as far as possible by height, using Nganglong Kangri II for the 6600m+ peak to the north of Nganglong Kangri I.*

waiting with a welcome brew.

During the evening call Martin had arranged for Pasang to help us dismantle ABC early the next day and at the appointed hour he duly arrived. There was too much equipment for the three of us to carry in one tranche, but once again Pasang volunteered to return with Kusang the same day for the residual items. Not wanting to reascend ourselves we did not argue. With lightened loads the descent to BC was a delight. For once we had the opportunity to view the gorge and its surroundings knowing that we not need to come this way again. Moreover, the pleasures of BC awaited us after six nights on a restricted and purely functional diet. Even the dust at BC seemed tolerable after our spell higher on the mountain.

Final Thoughts

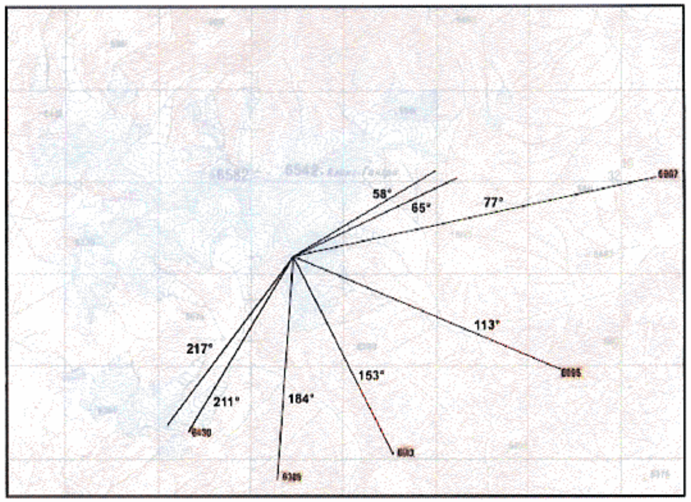
Wild and remote is probably the best way to describe the region comprising Nganglong Kangri. There are few inhabitants in the valleys and those nomads that do exist rarely travelled as far as BC. Indeed, only once were we visited, when two young men arrived on a motorcycle one evening wearing military fatigues! Life has inevitably changed over the years for these people but it is interesting that beasts of burden were notable by their absence. The only domesticated animals seemed to be sheep and goats.

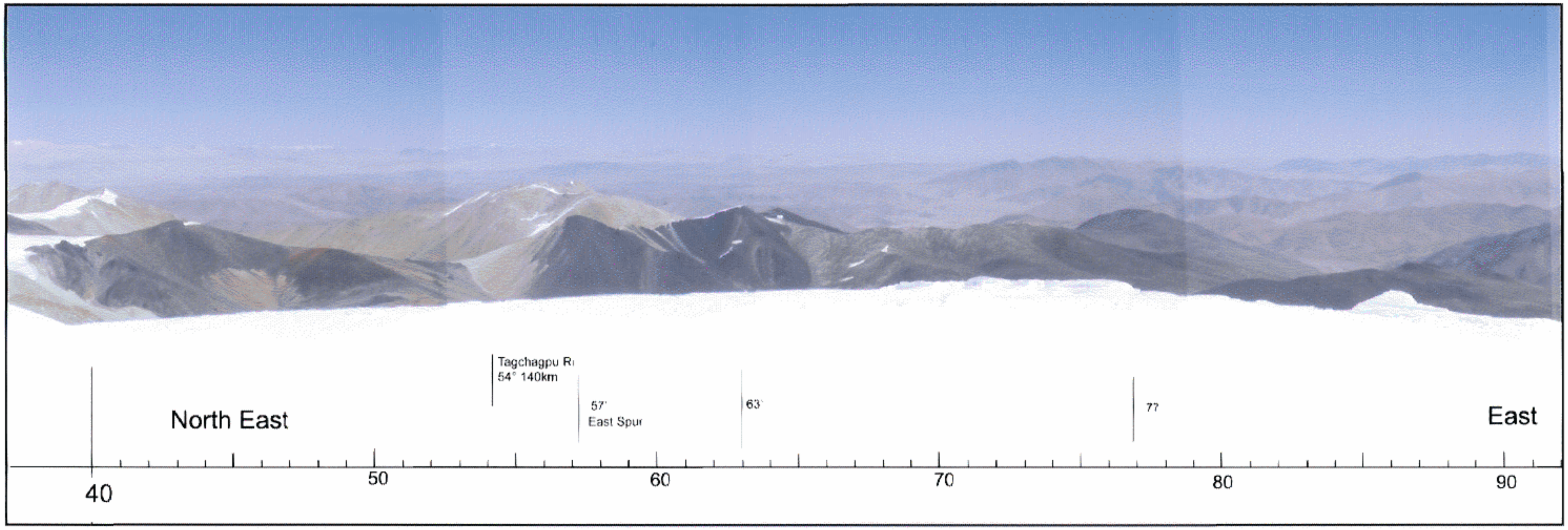
Summit Panoramas

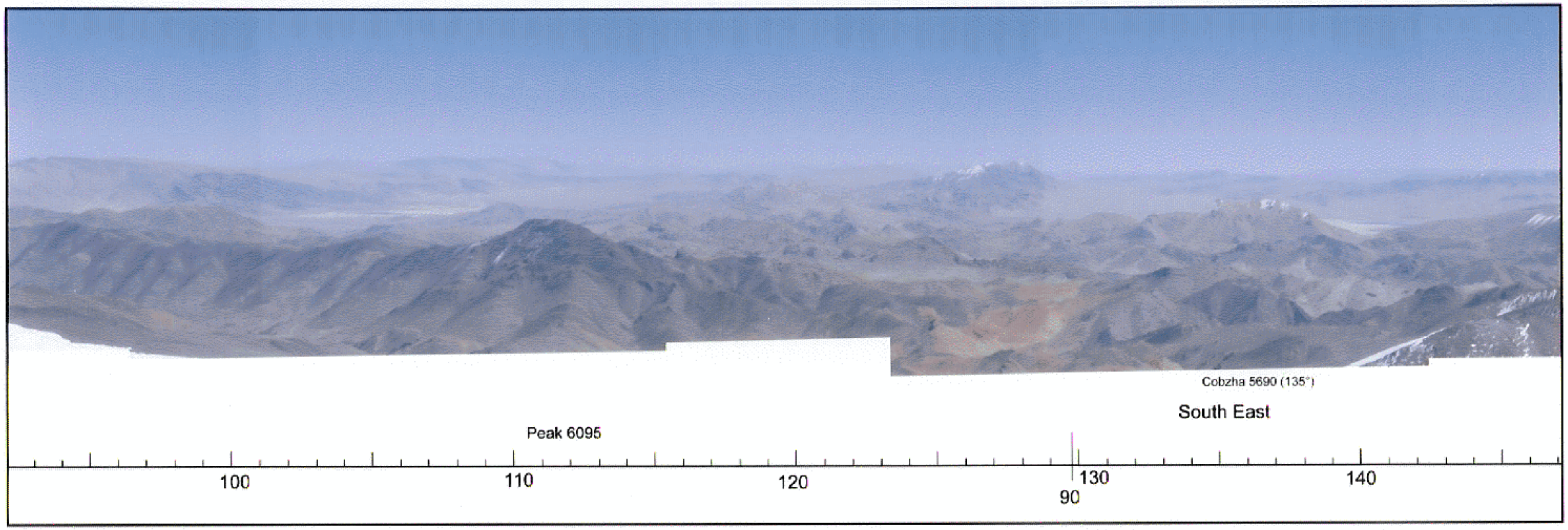
Series of photos by Martin Scott

During his time on the summit, Martin took a total of 77 photos, including two full 360° panoramas. These pictures were of enormous value in elucidating the topography of the range and show the enormous distances which can be seen in the dry air of the West Tibet. Though it is unlikely they noticed at the time, when the pictures are enlarged Kailas was clearly visible 195 km to the south. To the north and north west there is an array of unexplored and largely un-named 6000m peaks lining the horizon at the limit of visibility.

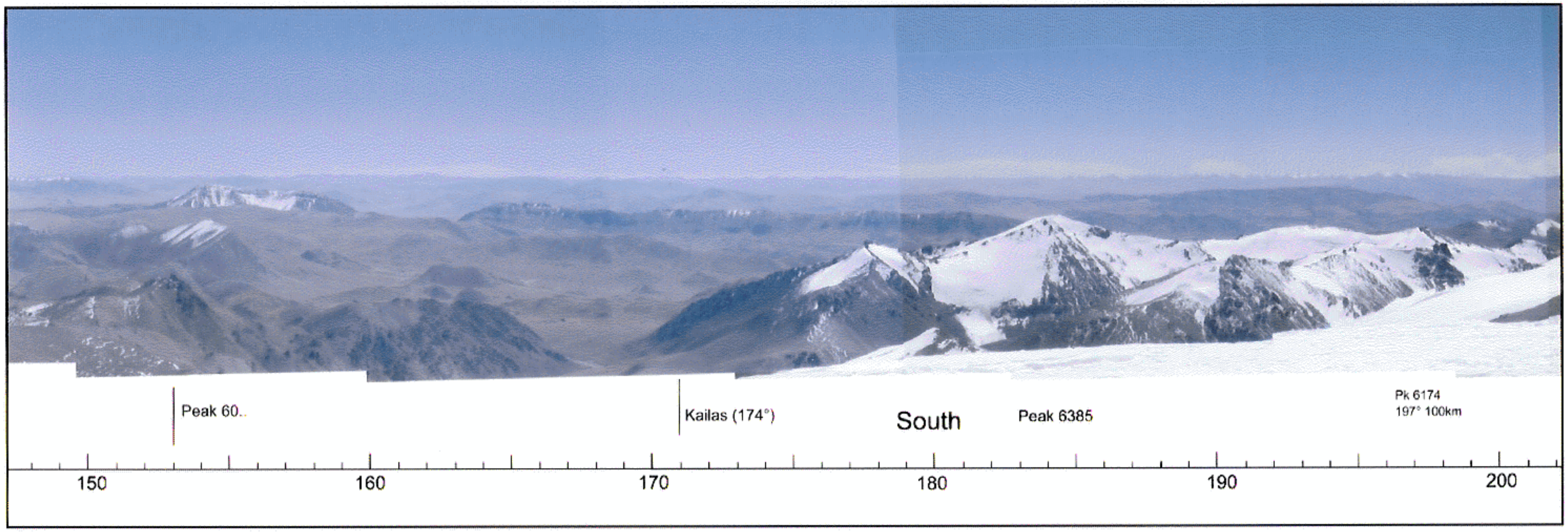
This panorama is composed of 29 separate photos merged together and calibrated from the map by reference to known features (see illustration on left). The bearing of unknown peaks can then be read off and checked against the map (see illustration on page 20, outermost circle is 200km radius).



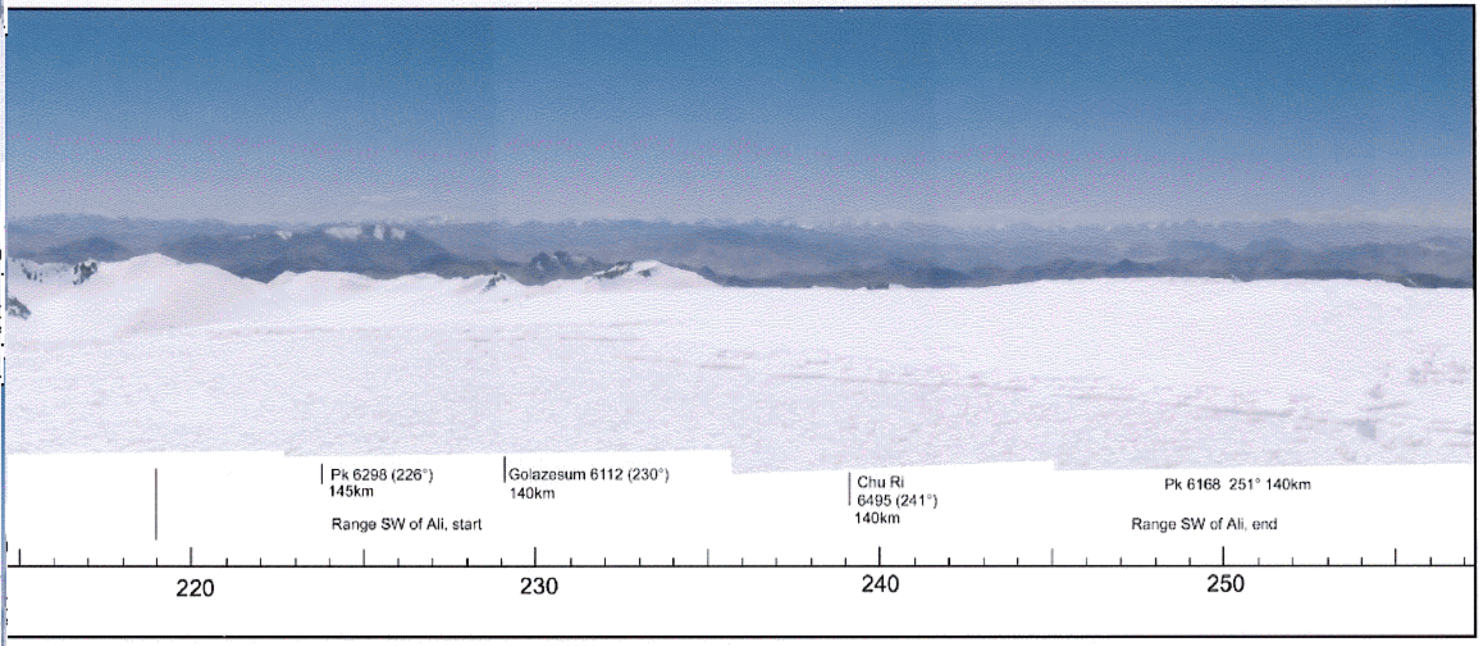


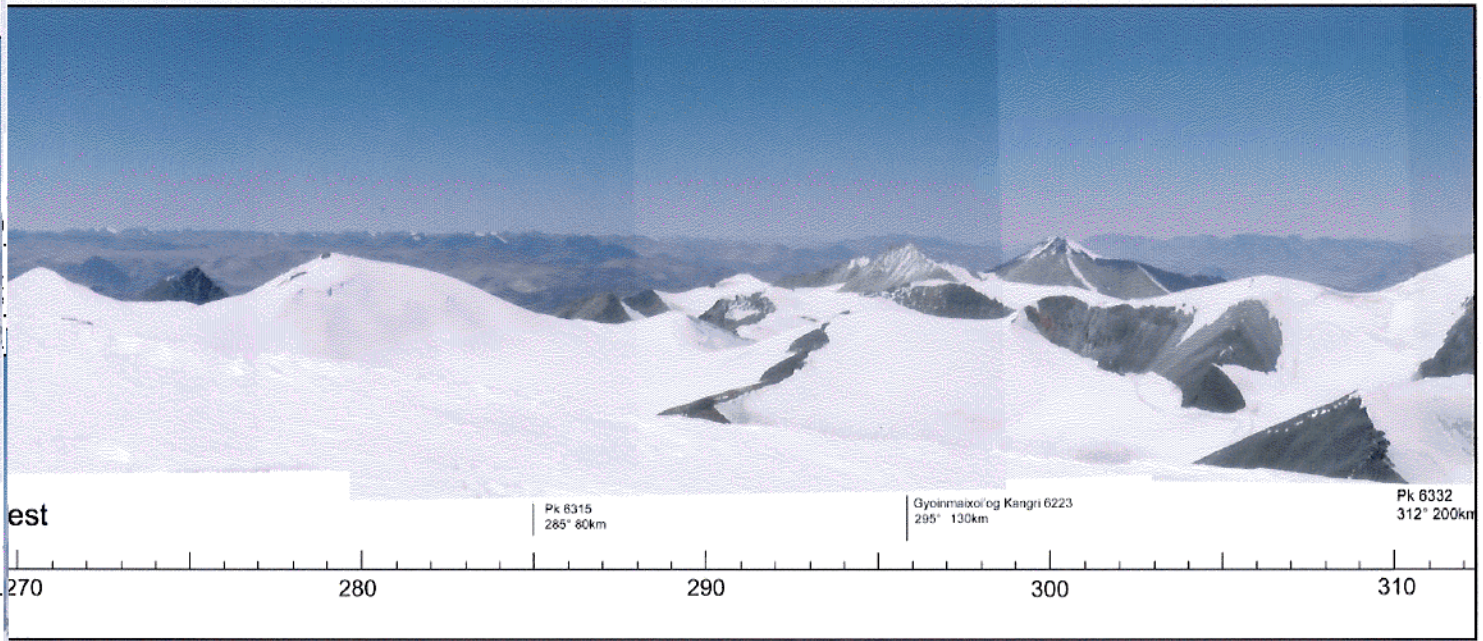


Cobzha 5690 (135°)
South East
Peak 6095
100
110
120
130
90
140



Peak 60..
Kailas (174°)
South
Peak 6385
Pk 6174
197° 100km
150
160
170
180
190
200


Pk 6298 (226°)
145km
Golazesum 6112 (230°)
140km
Range SW of Ali, start
Chu Ri
6495 (241°)
140km
Pk 6168 251° 140km
Range SW of Ali, end
220
230
240
250


est
Pk 6315
285° 80km
Gyoinmaixoi'og Kangri 6223
295° 130km
Pk 6332
312° 200km
270
280
290
300
310