

**Mount Everest Foundation Expedition Report of the
New Zealand Himalaya Alpine-Style Expedition, 2007 to Garhwal
Himalaya, India.**

Aug-Oct 2007

(Ref 07/12).

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Mount Everest Foundation

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1. Overall Aim

The overall aim of the expedition was to climb a new route on Changabang's North Face, and complete the second ascent of the West Ridge. Also, as part of the acclimatisation process, the aim was to climb new routes on the southern side of Purbi Dunagiri. Changabang (6864m) and Purbi Dunagiri (6489m) are peaks situated at the head of the west branch of the Bagini Glacier in the western Garhwal Himalaya, India.

2. Summary

The New Zealand Himalaya Alpine-Style expedition spent five weeks in the Bagini Glacier between early September and mid-October 2007. The expedition made attempts on the North Face and West Ridge of Changabang, with both attempts unsuccessful.

The expedition comprised of two climbing teams, plus the Indian contingent of liaison officer, cook, and cook's helper. Each climbing team operated independently above Advance Base Camp, employing their own methods. The North Face team reached a high point of c6200m after five days on the route, linking previously unclimbed terrain. The West face team established a camp at c5900m on the West Ridge, but a severe storm ruled out any further progress. The expedition departed Base Camp on 7th October.

Climbing conditions were compromised by the late ending of the monsoon season, followed by the early arrival of winter snowfalls. The consequent unstable weather pattern curtailed the climbing opportunities and made for hazardous retrieval of equipment following the major storm event.

Other international teams in the valley were similarly hampered by conditions, with a large scale Indian team's success on Trisuli West being the only success of the season.

3. Introduction

3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the expedition was to:

- To make the first ascent of a new route on the north face of Changabang (6864m)
- To make first ascent(s) of new route(s) on the south & east pillar of Purbi Dunagiri (6489m)
- To make the first repeat ascent of the West Ridge (Boardman/Tasker) of Changabang (6864m)

As well, it was the intention through the make up of the team to mentor talented young New Zealand mountaineers in the Himalayan environment.

3.2 Location.

Access to the south face of Purbi Dunagiri (6489m) and the north & western aspect of Changabang (6864m) is from the West Branch of the Bagini Glacier. This drains into the Dhauli Ganga (river) and into the Alaknanda Ganga, the major tributary of the Ganges River.

Purbi Dunagiri and Changabang are part of the Kumaon Himalaya, in the Uttarakhand State of India (lat 30.52, long 79.90). The Kumaon forms the eastern section of the Indian Himalaya and is adjacent to Nanda Devi, the highest peak wholly within Indian borders. Changabang is also part of the "rim" of the "Nanda Devi Sanctuary", a protected area.

3.3 Character and Access

Two days travel by bus from New Delhi via Rishikesh leads to Joshimath on the Alaknanda River. Access to the area is by road from Joshimath (c1700m) to Jumma (c2000m) on a well-formed road that follows the Dhauli Ganga. Travel was made by jeep to the road head, which consists of a suspension bridge across the river and forms the access to the Dunagiri Gad and villages of Ruing (c2600m) and Dunagiri (c 3600m).

Once at the road head it is apparent that one is in a desert-like region, on the northern aspect of the main peaks of the range and as such in a rain shadow. There is a tendency for the weather that is generated on the Indian plains to move up the Alaknanda Valley, and by pass the side valley of the Dhauli, and certainly the Dunagiri Gad. Vegetation is sparse and mainly consists of conifer forests.

A high quality trail leads to Ruing in 1-2 hours walking, the site of the first night camp. Following, a steep climb of 3-4 hours leads to Dunagiri, a winter only village above the tree line. The final days approach begins by crossing the Dunagiri Gad by a small footbridge and follows a faint path that leads up the true right (east) of the Dunagiri Gad to the foot of the Bagini Glacier at c4000m. From here a route exists on or beside the lateral moraine on the true right of the glacier to the site of Base Camp at c4500m, approximately 4 hours from Dunagiri village.

4. Personnel

The expedition members comprised of four New Zealand residents and one Australian resident, plus the Indian contingent of one Liaison Officer, one cook, and one cook's helper. The personnel are listed below:

Brian Alder (expedition leader)	}	New Zealand
Marty Beare		
Kester Brown		
Craig Jefferies		
Adam Darragh		Australia
Chetan – liaison officer	}	India
Pasang – cook		
Dawa – cook's helper		

5. Research and Preparation

5.1 Introduction.

This section describes the expedition's preparation prior to leaving New Zealand.

5.2 Research

Minimal research was required, as one member had previously visited the area in 2002. Original research was based on the books "The Shining Mountain", by Pete Boardman, On Thin Ice by Mick Fowler and Himalaya Alpine-Style by Andy Fanshawe and Stephen Venables. Also, previously personal communications were held with Roger Payne who visited the area and attempted routes in 1996 & 1997. ,

One map of the region was obtained.

5.4. Formalities.

An application for a permit for climbing Changabang was lodged with the Indian Mountaineering Foundation, and approval granted.

5.5. Provisions, Fuel, and Equipment.

Provisions and fuel for this expedition were prepared according to whether they were to be consumed during the period spent at Base Camp (including the walk-in and walk-out) or for the period above Base Camp. The expedition employed the trekking agency “Shikhar Travels” to organise provisions and fuel for the walk-in and out, plus days at Base Camp. The expedition members provided provisions for 21 days to be used beyond Base Camp.

Food consumed beyond Base Camp involved a combination of specialist items that the expedition shipped into India plus other “dry” food items that were purchased from a supermarket in Delhi. Specialist food items included freeze-dried meal, foil-packaged tuna, energy bars and gels, and carbohydrate/isotonic ‘sports’ drinks.

Snow shoes (MSR) were used by four of the five expedition members.

The “North Face” Each team climbed with one 60 metre x 9.1 mm. rope and one 60 metre x 8.4 mm. rope, and a medium-sized rack of rock, ice, and snow protection. The West Ridge team had 200m of 9mm static rope in addition to the equipment mentioned above. All expedition members used standard alpine climbing hardware.

Each team took two tents beyond Base Camp, one for ABC and another single-skin tent for the mountain.

Gas canisters and stoves were used for cooking once beyond Base Camp. A total of approximately 30 small gas canisters were used by the expedition climbing members during 17 -18 days. Melt-streams at ABC meant that there was no need to melt snow/ice while at this camp.

5.6 Finance.

The total cost of the expedition per member including airfares to and from New Zealand was estimated at NZ\$44,000. The total actual cost was NZ\$46,000. An outline of financial details of the expedition is presented below.

Income:

Income was gained as follows:

Income		Unit cost	Total NZS
Grants	NZAC	\$2,500	\$2,500
	MEF	£1,550	\$4,030
	SPARC	\$20,000	\$20,000
Fundraisers	Auction	\$2,535	\$2,535

Member contribution

Airfares -pd	CHC-DEL rtn	\$2,025	\$6,075
	CHC-DEL-BGK-CHC	\$2,363	\$4,726
Travel & Climbing Insurance	Full mountaineering cover from NZAC	\$685	\$3,425
Medical	Inoculations	\$200	\$1,000
Visas	Tourist Visas	\$90	\$450
Visas		\$300	\$1,500

\$46,241

Equipment grants and support included:

- ‘Lara Bar’ – energy bars and gels, FoC
- C4 COFFEE, FoC
- OSM bars, Canterbury Biltong at wholesale
- Gear at wholesale from many agencies in New Zealand (Southern Approach, Marvelox, Ampro, Outsider, Gearshop)
- Loan gear from Macpac Wilderness Equipment Ltd.

Expenses:

NZ Expenses		Actual
Airfares		\$10,751
Airfreight		\$4,190
Travel & Climbing Insurance		\$3,425
Visas		\$450
Team Equipment		\$1,029
Medical		\$379
		\$1,000
Food		\$1,577
India Expenses		Actual US\$
IMF Peak fee		\$1,600
Liaison Officer		\$500
Trekking company		\$11,150
Porters - High Altitude		\$180
Mountain Fuel		100
Tips		550
On ground Expenses		Actual INR
State Peak fee		65,000
Transit food		10,000
BC Food		29,000
Tips		4,001
		\$46,056

5.7 Insurance

Members arranged insurance through the NZAC.

5.8 Medical arrangements

All expedition members made personal arrangements to be inoculated against tetanus prior to arriving in the region. Most members also received inoculation against typhoid and hepatitis A.

The team had extensive personal first-aid and medication kits. These proved adequate for the minor ailments suffered (coughs and flu, muscle strain, headache, etc.).

5.9 Travel arrangements & Logistics.

The expedition members flew to Delhi via Singapore Airlines, arriving in the early morning of 22th August. A representative from our trekking agency met all members at the airport. We also freighted 300 kg of luggage to and from India with Singapore Airways to our trekking agency, which they provided clearance support for.

Shikhar Travels provided transport and drivers for the road trip to and from Jumma, as well as organising all accommodation arrangements. In Delhi we stayed at the Indian Mountaineering Foundation. Hotel accommodation was used in Rishikesh and Joshimath on both up and down journeys. All accommodation was pre-arranged by agency.

Porters were obtained by Shikhar Travels for the journey from the roadend at Jumma to BC and return. All portage in the Dunagiri area must be carried out by the local villagers. These led to some difficulties where the numbers of porters seeking work was greater than the number of loads available. Also, it should be noted for future expeditions that unlike the Gangotri region where Nepalis make up the porter workforce, here the porters mainly comprise older men and women who are supplementing their income. As such they are not as experienced in load carrying and tend to object to odd-sized and shaped loads (e.g. barrels). Shikhar Travels managed all negotiations with the porters successfully, though with some difficulty.

6. Activity/ Trip Log

- 22 August: Depart Christchurch, New Zealand and arrive New Delhi, India via Singapore at 2300hrs.
- 23-24 August: Briefing with IMF, repacking of gear, shopping in Delhi and some sightseeing.
- 25-26 August: Travel by bus Delhi/ Rishikesh/ Joshimath with all team members and support staff (Liaison Officer, Cooks, Trekking guide).
- 27-28 August: Overnight trip to Badrinath (c3000m) for acclimatisation. Day walk and visit to temple. On return to Joshimath re-pack loads into 25kg porter loads.
- 29-31 August: Drive Joshimath to Jumma by jeep (1.5 hrs) then walk to Ruing (1 hr). Following days trek to Base Camp via Dunagiri (4 hrs) and BC (4 hrs).
- 1-3 September: Load carries to Dump Camp at 5000m on true left of West Bagini Glacier, adjacent to prominent stream that drains east Face of Purbi Dunagiri. First day employed 4 high altitude porters who carried 20kgs each. Approximately 1.5-2.5 hrs up to Dump Camp
- 4-8 September: Load carries from Dump Camp to Advanced Base Camp (ABC) at c5100m immediately adjacent to north Face of Changabang. Travel time 3-4 hours up, 2 hours down. Spent one night at ABC before returning to BC. All equipment now at ABC for both teams.

West Ridge Team

- 10-13 September: Up glacier to ABC, then fixed ropes to col at 5800m on West Ridge of Changabang over 2 days. Climbing from ABC to bergshund involved straightforward glacier travel with low crevasse risk (unroped) to 5500m. Fixed 6 x 60m ropes to ridge on

predominantly 50-55° snowslope, and one more along ridge to campsite. Also managed to carry all climbing hardware to high point along with some food and fuel.

- 14-15 September: Rest days at BC
- 16-18 September: Up to ABC in 4hrs, then next day up fixed ropes to Ridge Camp (RC) at col on West Ridge. Climbed 3 pitches above camp on easy mixed ground and 60° snow/ice. Descent all the way to BC.
- 19-22 September: BC resting. Weather mixed with rain & snow throughout these days. Weather forecast is for worse weather in coming week.
- 23-28 September: One team member (Alder) sick, so Beare & Darragh headed up to Ridge Camp with the aim of fixing more rope, and wait for Alder to arrive in few days. In the meantime a large, forecasted storm rolled in which dumped up to a metre of snow at BC, crushing tents and generally causing chaos. After 2 days team at RC confined to tent and having trouble keeping camp intact and cooking. Radio call on morning of 27/9 indicated that they were descending and would confirm safety that evening, however no contact was made. On 28/9 party of five (2 LO's, 2 from Dutch expedition + Alder) left BC to look for Beare & Darragh. Search party met them above Dump Camp at 1pm. Travel on glacier was extremely difficult due to very deep snow. Beare & Darragh had spent night on glacier with no gear or food as had been unable to locate ABC. All returned to BC in good health.
- 29-30 September: Rest days at BC, weather unsettled and snowing.
- 1-4 October: Return to ABC with the intention of removing all equipment from mountain. On 2nd October back to RC and remove all food and equipment, including all fixed rope back to ABC. 3-4 October spent taking all gear to BC, with assistance of LO.
- 5-6 October: At BC packing in preparation for departure.
- 7-10 October: Leave BC and travel to Delhi via Dunagiri, Joshimath and Rishikesh. Met by Shikhar Travel representative at Jumma.
- 11-12 October: Delhi, packing gear for freighting, IMF debrief and Shikhar travel debrief.
- 13 - 14 October: Fly Delhi via Singapore to Christchurch, New Zealand.

North Face Team

- 9-11 September: Acclimatisation trip to camp at 5700m on shoulder of "Snowdome" above basecamp, near Trisuli West. Two nights spent in poor weather with frequent drizzle and snow showers.
- 12-13 September: Rest days at BC
- 14 September: To ABC.
- 15 September: Rest day at ABC.
- 16-21 September: Attempt on North face of Changabang, starting as for 1996 British attempt.
Day 1: Up approach slopes to bivvy (c5500m) at start of steep climbing.
Day 2: Climb steep snow covered ice up to 90° to cramped bivvy below shoulder (c5800m).
Day 3: Climbed difficult mixed pitches then upper gully to good tent bivvy on shoulder (c6000m).

Day 4: Rest day, inclement weather.

Day 5: Completed traverse of central icefield to exit via hard ice pitches onto shoulder under exit gully, joining with line of British 1997 route. Poor bivvy (c6200m) on minimal ice ledge 15 cms wide.

Day 6: Descend to ABC due to incessant snowfall overnight making progress impossible. Descent via 16 abseils on v-threads, completed in 5 hours.

- 22 September: Rest day at ABC.
- 23 September: Descend with all gear to BC.
- 24-26 September: Rest at BC, waiting out storm.
- 27 September: Walk out to Dunagiri village
- 28 September: Walk to road end and hitch ride into Joshimath on local transport.
- 29-30 September: Travel to Rishikesh. Much damage to roads, so many delays resulting in taking 2 days to make the journey.
- 1-6 October: R&R in Rishikesh, with Jefferies recovering from frostnip and mild trench foot.
- 7-10 October: Travel to Delhi via Agra, general sightseeing.
- 11-16 October: Delhi, general sightseeing, waiting for flight out.
- 17 October: Depart Delhi for Singapore and Thailand.

7. Conclusion

To conclude:

- The expedition was unsuccessful in its main aim of ascending the Changabang by either its West Ridge or North Face, or of subsequent aim of attempting new routes on Purbi Dunagiri.
- The expedition did succeed in climbing new ground on the North Face of Changabang, linking the 1996 British line with the 1997 British line.
- The climbing tactics selected by our expedition were appropriate for the challenges that we encountered:
 - On the West Ridge, our plan to use fixed rope up to the end of the first difficulty followed by an alpine-style attempt from there appears to be the best option. The route is extremely steep lower down and requires significant time commitment. On the North Face the decision to climb alpine-style nearly proved to be successful. Given better weather there is every chance that this team would have reached the summit ridge.
 - Our decision to bring and use snow-shoes proved to be correct for access and egress in the region. Other expeditions in the area after the major storm of 22-29 September were stuck at Base Camp.
- One aspect that future parties may want to re-consider is the degree of acclimatisation undertaken for alpine-style ascents. We later realised that there are a number of good peaks immediately above BC in the 6000-6400m range, with easy access and descents which would have been ideal for the purpose.

8. Acknowledgments

The expedition gratefully acknowledges assistance from the following organizations:

- Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) for financial assistance.
- The Mount Everest Foundation for financial assistance.
- The New Zealand Alpine Club for financial assistance.
- The following companies for providing equipment and provisions: Ampro, Southern Approach NZ, Marvelox, Macpac Wilderness Equipment Ltd, Nuun, Canterbury Biltong, Singapore Airlines.

9. Copyright

The compiler of this report and the members of this expedition agree that all or part of it may be copied for the purpose of private research.

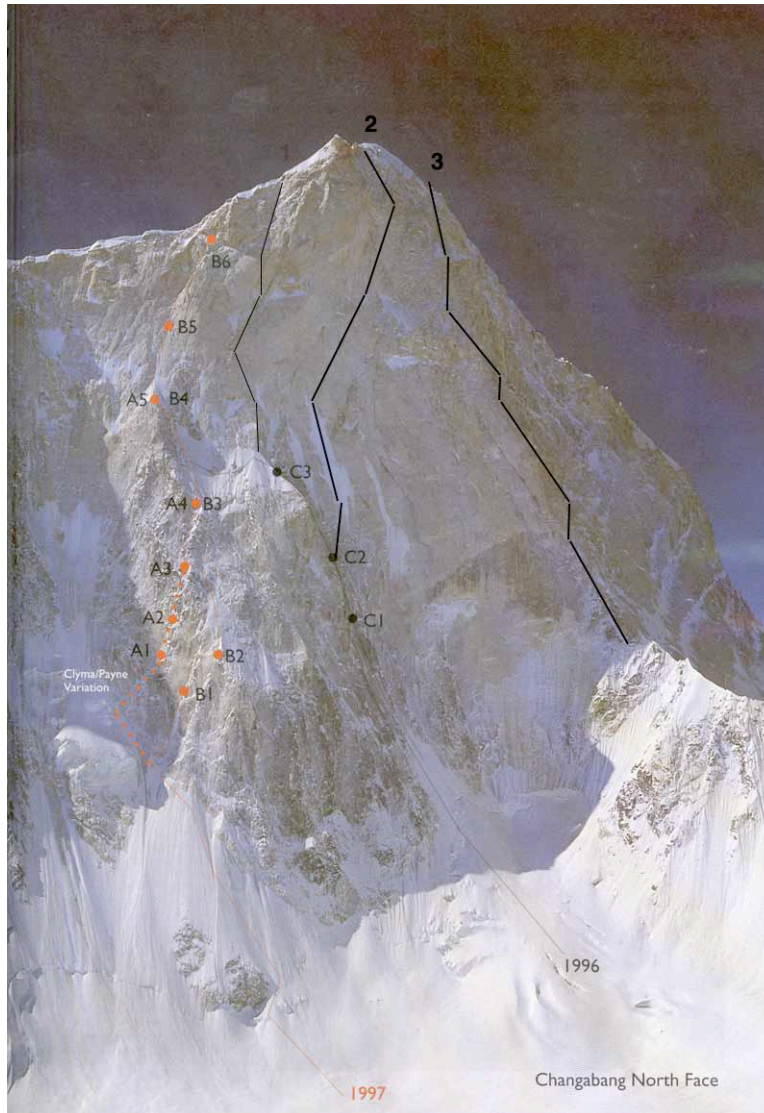
Appendix A Bibliography

- Boardman, P. (1976) *The Shining Mountain*.
- Andy Fanshawe, Stephen Venables (1996), *Himalaya Alpine-Style*.
- Mick Fowler (2005), *On Thin Ice*.

Appendix B Photographs



A wide-angle view of Purbi Dunagiri (Ian Parnell). The high point of Purbi Dunagiri is on the extreme right on the photo, with East Ridge (4) forming the line between sun & shade. The line of the Indian ascent traverses left under the serac in the centre-right, and zags back right to the summit. The 2002 DAV German expedition attempted the East Ridge and the pillar (2) immediately left of the serac. The 2002 NZ team recce'd the pillar 2nd from left (1).



Changabang (6864m) North Face showing 1996 British attempt (C), and 1997 British route (A&B). Proposed new route (1) is a direct finish to the 1996 British line. The 1998 Russian route (2) lies immediately right of the '96 British attempt, up the centre of the north face. The West Ridge (Boardman/Tasker) is marked (3).

Appendix C Maps and Diagrams



Map of general area, showing Bagini Glacier approach. Note that Purbi Dunagiri lies immediately north of the 'dot' marking the site for ABC.



Topographic map of Bagini Glacier region.

Appendix D Address Information

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