



## AAC Publications

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### **Chiche Peak (5,860m) and Other First Ascents**

Asia, Pakistan, Western Himalaya

During our 2009 climb of Schlagintweit Peak (5,979m, AAJ 2010), I spotted an impressive summit in the neighboring Chiche Valley. Back home I did some research. I found a sketch map, on which it was named Chiche Peak. Later, I was told that the famous British mountaineers Collie and Mummery had tried it in 1895 while preparing for their Nanga Parbat attempt. There is no other report of any mountaineering action in this valley since Mummery's visit.

Stefan Wolf and I arrived in the valley during July. Bad weather accompanied us. Heavy rains had swept away bridges, so even reaching base camp proved difficult. We established base camp at 3,700m. Although we could barely see the peaks, we had selected this site previously using Google Earth.

When the clouds parted that evening, we could hardly believe our eyes: in front of our tent rose a superb piece of granite. It was not Chiche Peak, but it was a beautiful objective. We checked our gear: three Friends, five nuts, and four pegs. Not much, but in the main we'd expected to be ice climbing.

We started the next morning at 4:30 and climbed the first 900m of easy ground in three hours. Then, following fine cracks, chimneys, and diedres through steep granite (UIAA VII-), we reached the 5,086m summit. It was 3 p.m., and the vertical rise of our climb had been 460m. Rappelling and downclimbing the route took a further four hours. Locals told us that the name of the peak was Shalmuki, which means "a hundred faces."

Over the next three days we climbed two more peaks: Nilo Peak (4,986m, GPS), and Gerd-Markert Peak (4,966m, ice at 45°, and two pitches on rock at UIAA IV). We named the latter after a German climber, who died in April 2010.

The weather now turned bad, and we had heavy rain for one week. In our remote valley we were unaware of the devastation this was causing throughout Pakistan. Then, a short window of three days allowed us to make the first ascent of Chiche Peak, our principle objective. We first followed the Chuchuel Glacier to the rimaye, which we found difficult to cross. Above, 600m of excellent névé of increasing steepness brought us to the southeast ridge, where we found a nice tent site at 5,200m.

On August 11 we set out late due to poor visibility. Apart from two crevasses, there were no major difficulties, and the névé was good, rising to 60° just below the summit. We only needed to belay part of the route, and we reached the top at 3 p.m.

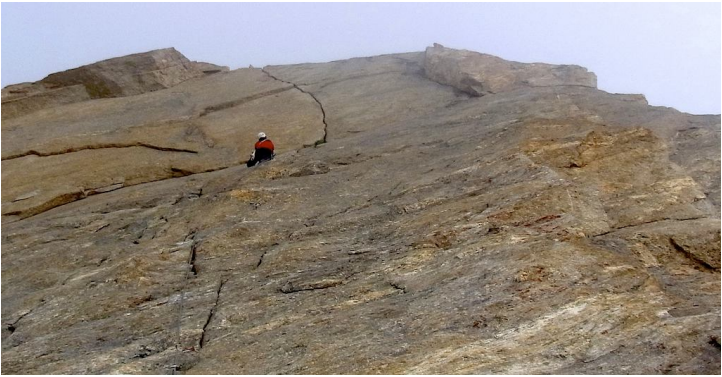
The weather now turned bad again, and we were brought news of disastrous floods. This forced us to leave base camp early. Travel back to Islamabad was a real adventure, with every road blocked and most bridges damaged. We were lucky to reach the capital within two days, having changed vehicles 11 times.

Back home I got a reprint of Norman Collie's *Climbing on the Himalaya and Other Mountain Ranges*. It clearly shows their Chiche Peak to be different than ours, as they began their attempt from the Rupal Valley. It might possibly be Shaigiri Peak (6,245m, AAJ 2010 map, p. 261), which was climbed in 1988 from the north by Canadians Barry Blanchard, Kevin Doyle, and Ward Robinson.

## Images



Chiche Peak, showing line of first ascent up northeast face and southeast ridge. Dot marks camp on crest of ridge.



Stefan Wolf about to tackle the curving crack on the first ascent of Breathless, Shalmuki Peak.



Nilo Peak (left) and Gerd Markert Peak.



Shalmuki Peak, showing line of first ascent; Breathless (UIAA VII-).

## Article Details

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