



AAC Publications

Lenak Valley, L15, East Face

India, Zaskar

I led a four-man team from the Gakushuin University Alpine Club to the Lenak Valley, having seen a picture of L15 (6,070m) in Kimikazu Sakamoto's AAJ 2012 report. We were fascinated by its elegant shape, and by a snow ridge on the left side of the image that we felt would provide a good route [In 2012 a four-member Japanese team planned to attempt this peak, but once at its base they decided it was too dangerous due to steep unstable scree and potential avalanches, and instead made an ascent of L13 (AAJ 2013)].

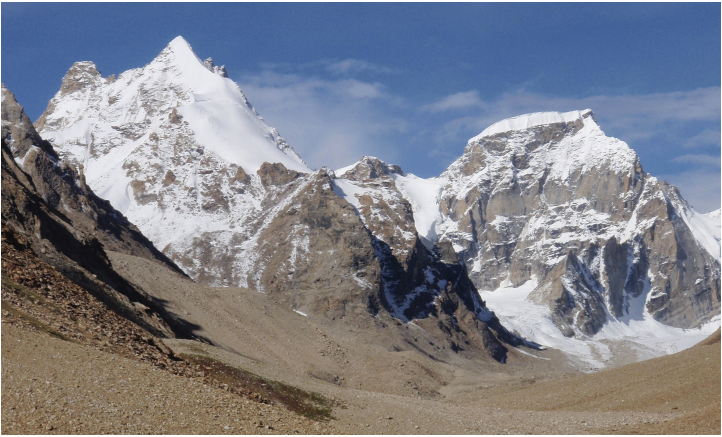
On August 12, Kazu Ghalamkari, Masayuki Harada, Mizuho Kajita, and I established base camp at 4,830m (33°05'44.7"N, 77°02'54.8"E), and subsequently made a reconnaissance of the east face. The scree was hard to climb, but we marked our route with cairns and reached 5,100m before returning to base. On the 14th we looked at the west face and saw it had a dangerous hanging serac, so after another trip up the east face to 5,300m, we carried ropes and tents to a camp at 5,400m on the 17th. On the 20th we pushed up hard snow to 5,600m, and because we felt good, decided to return to base camp and make a one-day summit ascent on August 22

We all left at base camp at 5 a.m., and by 11 a.m. we had reached steep névé, where we had to climb one at a time. The snow was so hard we found it difficult to place snow stakes, but after six pitches on the final sharp ridge we reached the loose, rocky summit. During the descent to base camp we belayed down eight pitches. The weather got worse and I felt sick from the altitude, and eventually threw up, but we encouraged each other and finally reached camp at 7:30 p.m. It had been the most exiting 14 hours of our lives. We left no equipment on the mountain.

We named this peak Gyalmo Kangri after consultation with our Zaskari guide; Gyalmo means "queen" in Ladakhi. We were lucky to have good support from our guide and LO. There are many attractive virgin mountains in this area and we hope that expeditions will attempt them via the proper procedure, which involves obtaining an official permit from the IMF.

Shuhei Yoshida, Japan

Images



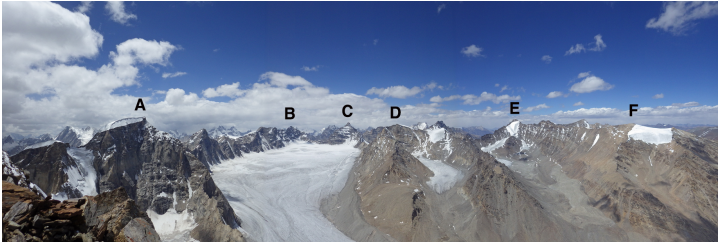
L15 (left) and L14 (6,180m, no known ascent) from the Lenak Glacier, as seen in 2011. The route of ascent on L15 faces the camera, climbing the large snow slope of the east face and final sharp ridge.



Climbing the final snow ridge on the east face of Gyalmo Kangri.



East face of Gyalmo Kangri and route of ascent.



Looking northwest at the upper Lenak Glacier from the summit of Gyalmo Kangri. (A) L14 (6,180m). (B) R32 (6,054m). (C) R33 (6,128m). (D) L13 (6,080m, official ascent in 2012, but climbed before). (E) L10 (6,165m, official ascent in 2012, but climbed before). (F) L11 (6,045m, attempted in 2012).

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