



AAC Publications

Shiepra, South Face; Kharagosa, East Face and Southeast Face; Kishtwar Shivling East Summit, East Pillar

India, Kishtwar Himalaya

At the start of September, Andreas "Dres" Abegglen, Thomas Senf, and I left Switzerland for Kishtwar, a magical and remote region I first visited in 2011. We were greeted in Kashmir by a late and heavy monsoon, but despite mass flooding and terrible road conditions we made it to our first base camp on the 13th.

Eager to make up for lost time, we set out for a peak that we believe to be previously unclimbed, immediately north of the Muni La. [This peak lies immediately south of the old trekking route over the Umasi La, and a little west of the pass.] We climbed the south face with a bivouac at 5,100m and reached the 5,885m summit on the 16th. Difficulties were WI3 UIAA IV 75°. We descended the exposed west ridge, making a series of rappels before going down a 50° ice slope. We named the peak Shiepra, and the route Maaji (Hindi for mother). More correctly, it was our liaison officer, Ran Jan, who named the peak, after the wife of the Hindu god Shiva.

The weather at this point was perfect and conditions seemed promising, so we set off for another virgin peak, the sharp, high summit on the long ridge that runs east-southeast from Kishtwar Shivling. Below the mountain is a prominent rock formation that looks like a playboy bunny, so naming this peak was easy: We called it Kharagosa, Hindi for rabbit. Approaching from the northeast, we bivouacked at 4,800m and then crossed the glacier to the foot of the east face. There we slanted right, across the lower face, before climbing back left toward the ridge. Three demanding pitches of UIAA V led to the crest, which was in fact the right edge of the much easier southeast face. We followed this to the 5,840m summit. The date was September 21, and we named our route Pinky (1,000m, M4 6a) after the most beautiful woman in the nearby village of Sumcham.

We still had time left and so decided to move our base camp beneath Kishtwar Shivling, arriving there on the 29th. The first and only ascent of this impressive ca 6,040m mountain was made in 1983 by Dick Renshaw and Stephen Venables, via the north face. We opted for the east pillar, the target of several previous expeditions. We made our first bivouac at 4,700m and then followed a 50° snow/ice ramp to a saddle at 5,400m, where we bivouacked again. Above, we moved right before climbing 10 demanding pitches in a hidden couloir (WI5 90°), reminiscent of the Supercanaleta on Fitz Roy. Tricky mixed terrain led to the foot of enormous capping cornices. It was October 1, and the gods were smiling on us: We chanced upon a tunnel big enough to climb through, and arrived on the east summit at 5,895m. We regained the saddle after 14 rappels, spent another night in the tents, and the following morning descended to base camp. We named the route Chalho (WI5 M6), which means "let's go" in Hindi.

We arrived home with rucksacks full of great memories of unforgettable climbs, and having had a lot of laughs together. This has only strengthened my bond with this breathtaking area.

-Stephan Siegrist, Switzerland

Images



In the hidden ice couloir of Kishtwar Shivling East.



On the south face of Shiepra. The notch in the ridge immediately behind is Muni La. The distant high peak is Chomochior, with the rock pyramid of Cerro Kishtwar to the right.



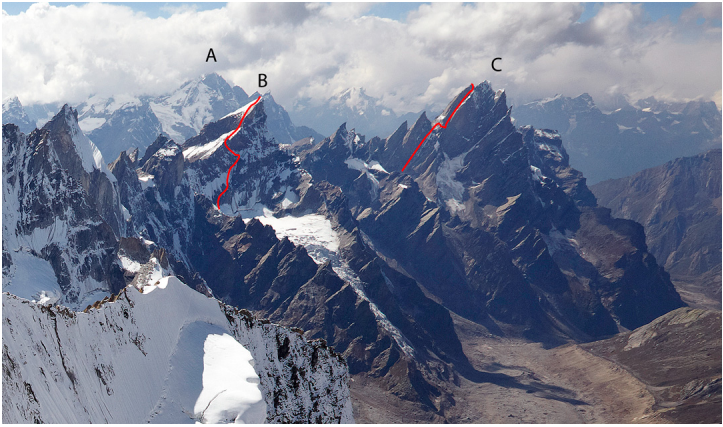
Karagosa from the east, with the line of Pinky (1,000m, M4 6a).



Maagi on the south face of Shiepra. The Swiss team descended the left skyline. The Muni La is the col at the base of the right skyline ridge.



Challo on the east face of Kishtwar Shivling East. The second bivouac was in the notch. The main summit is the middle of the three visible tops.



Looking west down the Haptal Valley. (A) Agyasol (6,200m). (B) Karagosa and the line of Pinky. (C) Kishtwar Shivling and the line of Challo.

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