



AAC Publications

Miyar Valley, Toro Peak, Wake up Tea; Lotus Peak, Splitter and Storm; Iris Peak, Bollywood Drama.

India, Himachal Pradesh, Miyar Valley

In August and September, Arunas Kamandulis and I (Lithuania), and Cyrill Boesch and Elias Gmuender (Switzerland), spent just over 20 days in the Miyar Valley. We were surprised to find ourselves the only team at base camp, and to see only a single party of trekkers during our stay.

To acclimatize we climbed a new variation on Toro Peak (ca 4,900m). Due to its proximity to base camp, it already has many routes on its faces, but we found the most attractive to be the Peschel-Schaar line from 2011, Best of Both Sides (AAJ 2012). We started up this but after 30m deviated left to climb an inviting roof. We continued via face climbing and another roof that we passed on its left side. A few more pitches took us to the bottom of the upper bowl, where we sought out the best rock on the left wall. We climbed left of the 2008 Lopez-Pfaff top-out (AAJ 2009), and called our variation Wake up Tea (400m of climbing, UIAA V).

We then set our sights on the upper Takdung Glacier, hoping to climb the southeast faces of Lotus Peak (sometimes spelled Lotos) and Neverseen Tower. While the Miyar has been a popular climbing destination for more than 20 years, only two groups have climbed from the Takdung Glacier: an Italian team in 2008 (AAJ 2009) and Americans in 2013 (AAJ 2014). Both Lotus Peak and Neverseen Tower have been climbed from the neighboring Chhudong Valley, and the latter has a handful of established routes, yet the faces above the Takdung had not been attempted.

We hiked up the Takdung in deteriorating weather. After a few days of waiting we set out during a clear night for Lotus Peak (ca 5,670m). After some initial easy pitches, beautiful granite unfolded with splitter cracks linked by fine face climbing. By the time we reached the summit clouds were closing in again. Rappelling in a heavy downpour of rain, snow, and all the water phases in between, we were happy to have squeezed this route into a short window of opportunity. We called it Splitter and Storm (500m, 6a). By the time we reached the tents, we were already scheming about climbs for the next weather window.

Because of rain during subsequent days, however, our plans never materialized. We made another approach to the Takdung, only to get chased away by a snowstorm. On our last day at base camp, we got a half-day of good weather, and this allowed us to make a dash up another new variation on Iris Peak (ca 5,200m). We started up the first few pitches of the 2009 route D'yer Mak'er (AAJ 2013) to reach a big ledge, which we followed up right to the main part of the south face of Iris Peak. There we climbed a slanting system of chimneys and cracks to reach lower-angle terrain, where for about one pitch on the west ridge our climb shared the Peschel-Schaar line Four Seasons in One Day (AAJ 2012). With clouds getting thicker, and the first snow already falling, we traversed back to the headwall on the south face and finished via beautiful cracks leading straight to the summit. An easy, yet devious, descent in bad weather took us around the whole mountain in corkscrew fashion. We called this variation Bollywood Drama (550m, 6b), since we were not sure until the very last day whether we would be able to give this route a shot, and during the climb a weather front was approaching ominously. Feeling sore after this ascent, we packed our bags and started the walk out. Although we did not carry out all our plans, we left content.

-Gediminas Simutis, Lithuania

Images



Arunas Kamandulis high on Bollywood Drama, Iris Peak.



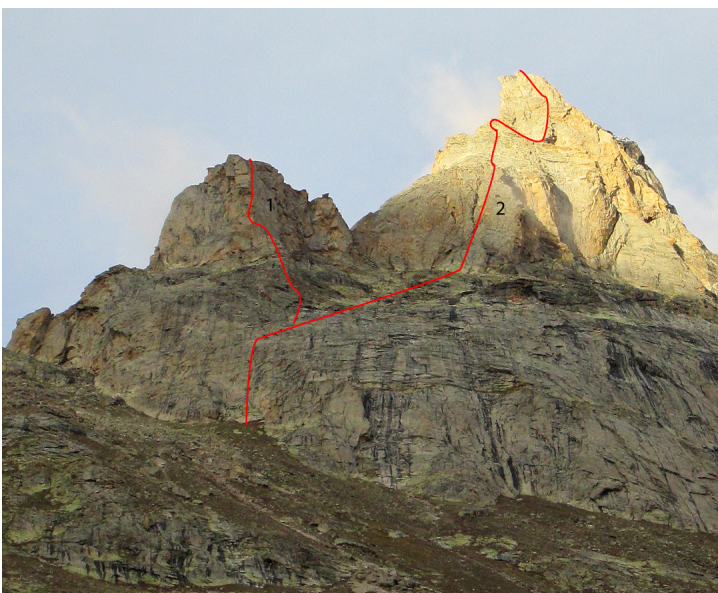
Elias Gmuender and Cyrill Boesch reaching the summit plateau of Lotus Tower, with Ogre III in the background.



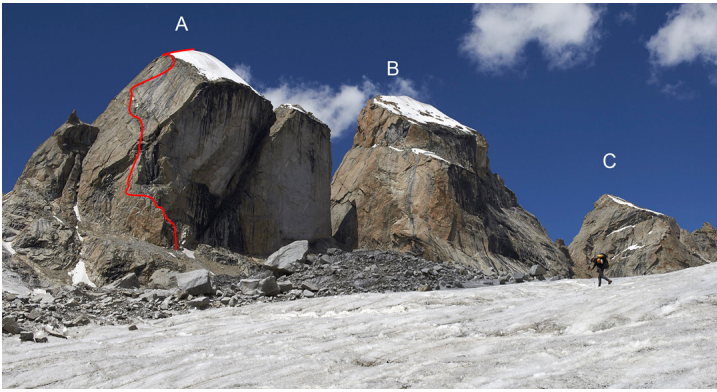
Cyrill Boesch on the southeast face of Lotus Peak, with the Takdung Glacier below.



Cyrill Boesch climbing the lower crack pitches of Bollywood Drama on Iris Peak.



South face of David's 62 Nose (left) and Iris Peak. (1) D'yer Mak'er and (2) Bollywood Drama.



The east sides of (A) Lotus Peak, with the 2014 route Splitter and Storm, (B) Neverseen Tower, and (C) Enzo Peak, seen across the Takdung Glacier.



Wake up Tea on the south face of Toro. JAMES Peak to the right. For more routes on this face see AAJ 2013.

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