



AAC Publications

Shailaputri, Southwest Face

India, Himachal Pradesh, Miyar Valley

We arrived in the Miyar Valley on September 20 and set up base camp close to Padang at 3,700m. Our objective was the peak referred to as Tharang II (32°50'15.22"N, 76°56'42.00"E Google Earth) by the 2012 British expedition that climbed the higher Tharang I to the northeast. Being the first ascenders, we have given the peak the name Shailaputri.

We walked south up the Uldhampu Valley, making two camps, at 4,730m, where a side valley comes down from the peak, and at 5,030m, at a large in-filled lake west of the summit. On a reconnaissance and acclimatization day we hiked up a glacier and climbed a smaller peak of 5,352m on the ridge south of the summit. On the 28th we attempted the southwest face of Shailaputri, retreating from 5,900m due to weather conditions and lack of time. The disappointment was ameliorated by the fact that we had time for a second attempt, and that we now knew the way up and down.

At 6 a.m. on October 1 we started out again from our top camp, hiked up the glacier southwest of the mountain, climbed steep scree, and roped up at 5,400m. We moved together up ramps and steeper sections to a shoulder on the pronounced spur left of center on the southwest face, which rises toward the upper west ridge. We then cautiously climbed unroped (to minimize rockfall) up the loose spur until we reached its top at 5,800m. Here, we roped up again and, slanting right, moved together up 250m of 50°–60° snow, using ice screw and rock protection where possible. We arrived on the summit at 3 p.m. in good weather and visibility, and no wind. Our GPS recorded 6,025m and 32°50.249'N, 76°56.686'E. The overall grade was AD.

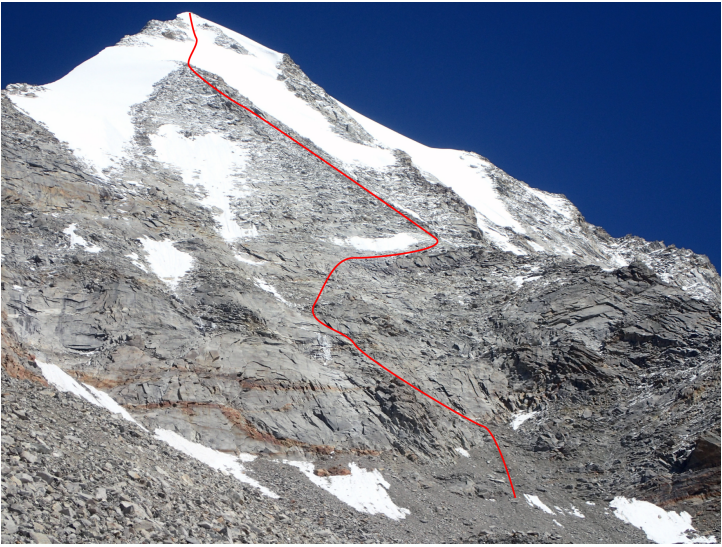
We descended the west face to the top of the spur and reversed unroped to the shoulder. From here we were able to make three long rappels to the bottom of the scree, reaching it at 8 p.m. At the end of the last rappel Anette was hit on the head by rockfall, destroying her headlamp but nothing else. After a tricky walk down through rough terrain with one headlamp, we arrived tired but happy at our top camp at 10 p.m.

The name Shailaputri, means "daughter of the mountain;" her Navratri festival day coincided with our summit day.

– Charlie French and Anette Kinde, Sweden

Previous Climbs Near the Uldhampu Valley: In September 2012 a British expedition, led by the guide Mark Thomas, explored the valley immediately north of the Uldhampu, establishing three camps above base camp, the highest (5,450m) in the glacial amphitheater below Tharang I's north face. From there, on the 25th, Steve Birch, Richie Mockler, and Thomas made the first ascent of Tharang I (6,066m, 32°50'39.77"N, 76°57'25.50"E Google Earth) via the west ridge (AD+). On the 28th, starting from base camp, Thomas made the first ascent of Tharang Fang (5,490m), via the east ridge, with three different members of the expedition, and on October 2 Thomas soloed the southwest ridge of a peak to the northeast of Tharang Fang, which he named Jasminka (5,401m). The ascent was 1,700m from base camp and PD+ (mainly UIAA III, but a long pitch of IV on the summit block).

Images



The southwest face of Shailaputri.



Anette Kinde at the bottom of the rock spur on the southwest face of Shailaputri. The view is southwest toward the southern head of the Uldhampu Glacier. The attractive sub-6,000m peaks may be unclimbed.



Charlie French approaching the summit of Shailaputri. The big peak behind and to the left is Pharbrang (6,172m), while the distant high peak to the right is Baihali Jot (6,295m).

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