



AAC Publications

Miyar Valley, Various Ascents

India, Himalchal Pradesh, Miyar Valley

My wife, Muriel Zucchini, and I initially went to the Miyar Valley in the fall of 2015. Our first route was on September 7, when, to acclimatize, we climbed a direct line up the southeast face of Point JAMES (4,965m). This followed a corner (5), featured slabs, and then a large crack (5). The 250m route required a full set of cams up to number 4. [Editor's note: This may share common ground with a route climbed by Australians in 2008 and repeated by Americans the same year with variations.]

The following day we put up No Mind (250m, 8 pitches, 6a+) on the south face of Toro Peak (4,970m), on the wall left of the 2008 Lopez-Pfaff Direttissima. From the top of the wall (sometimes referred to as the south summit, much lower than the main top), we descended on foot, leaving nothing in place on the route. The bottom of this wall, at the entrance to the Chhudong Valley, can be reached in two hours from base camp.

We had seen much information about routes on the west face of Castle Peak (the main summit is Tivoli Peak, 5,486m) and its subsidiary summits, but nothing about the south face. There is a good campsite on the south ridge at 4,480m (and water from a spring at 4,100m), and from that camp, on September 15, we climbed up and down the south buttress in 12 hours. The climbing begins at around 4,750m with grade 4 terrain but then becomes steeper at sustained 5 and 5+ before easing below the summit. Toward the top of our route, we found traces of previous climbing. [In 2008, Russians George Kozlov and Denis Savelyev climbed the south ridge, taking 20 hours to complete 1,100m of vertical ascent at 5.10b. It's likely this and the French route share common ground.]

Our last excursion from base camp took us two days up the Takdung Glacier to a camp below the east sides of Lotos Peak and Neverseen Tower. That night a snowstorm arrived and the temperature dropped to -15°C.

On the 20th, cloud still covered the sky, but we set out for a reconnaissance of the glacier above. A break in the weather allowed us a view of Lotos Peak (ca 5,670m) and what looked like an easy way to its summit on the south face, well left of the 2014 Lithuanian-Swiss route on the southeast face, **Splitter and Storm**. [Lotos Peak was first climbed in 2005, via the southwest face from the Chhudong Glacier, by David Kazlikowski and Micheal Krol (AAJ 2008)]. Our route, though straightforward, turned out to be somewhat involved, as we had only equipment for glacier travel: one 60m rope, six slings, no rock shoes, and a 20m cordelette that we used to make rappel anchors for the descent. Above a series of easy corners and cracks (up to 4+), we climbed a few slab pitches of 5a before joining the top section of Splitter and Storm, which we followed, in a return to bad weather, to the summit ridge. A snow crest continued to the top, but, as we had not brought crampons, we had to descend from this point. The next day there was 50cm of fresh snow on the glacier. Winter had arrived.

– Thibaut Tournier, France

Images



Thibaut Tournier on one of the harder pitches of the south buttress of Castle Peak.



The south buttress of Castle Peak and the line of the 2015 French route.



Thibaut Tournier on the large jam crack (5) in the upper southeast face of Point JAMES.



Excellent rock quality on the south buttress of Castle Peak.



The 2015 French route on the southeast face of Point JAMES. The right skyline, the northeast ridge, is the route of the first ascent in 2002, an easy scramble (UIAA II) by Igor Koller and Vlado Linek.



The south side of Lotos Peak from the Takdung Glacier. (1) 2015 French route. (2) Splitter and Storm (2014).



Muriel Zucchini moving across wonderful knobby granite on the long traverse (pitch 3, 6a) of No Mind, south face of Toro Peak.



No Mind on the south face of Toro Peak. The route finishes on a rounded shoulder from which it is possible to descend on foot. The much higher main summit is visible up to the right. The obvious chimney-corner system on the right side of the wall is the initial section of the Lopez-Pfaff Direttissima. In 2017, a New Zealand team climbed direct from the start of the No Mind traverse to create Moving through Space (18).

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