



Marikula Killa West Top (Miyar Shivling), Chodong Devling, and Other Ascents

India, Himachal Pradesh, Miyar Valley

In August 2017, having climbed several new routes in the Miyar Valley in the autumn of 2015, Muriel Zucchini and I returned to the Miyar, this time with three young climbers from Nice, Thomas Auvaro, Florence Cotto, and Antoine Rolle. We were a real Nissart team. [Nissart is a dialect of French associated with Nice.]

Our main goal was the first ascent of the west top of Marikula Killa. In 2016, Ian Dring and Martin Moran made the first ascent of the main top (5,755m) via the north spur and upper northwest ridge above the Jangpar Glacier (AAJ 2017). We wanted to climb the west buttress, which rises above a conspicuous pinnacle named Lammergeier Spire (ca 5,300m). Lammergeier Spire had been climbed in 2004 by Graham Little and Jim Lowther (U.K.) from the Miyar Glacier via an introductory rock ridge, snow slopes and some mixed ground, and finally eight pitches of wonderful chicken-head granite (British Severe) up the west ridge (AAJ 2005).

After arriving at base camp, Antoine was ill and needed many days to recover. Thomas and Florence acclimatized with a new route on Goya Peak (5,300m) that they named Spherotoniose (300m, 6b).

Two days later, Thomas, Florence, Muriel, and I left for the west buttress of Marikula Killa. We camped at the base, just above the glacier, then climbed the northwest-facing depression between Lammergeier Spire and another aiguille immediately left that we named Nissart Tower. We summited this tower and rappelled the far side, leaving 20m of rope fixed. We bivouacked in the gap beyond on snow. Next day, August 12, we continued up the west buttress to the summit on well-featured granite. We named our route Spicy Night (1,000m, 600m of climbing, 6a), and descended the same way, rappelling the route, with a re-ascent of Nissart Tower along the way. We dubbed the west summit Miyar Shivling.

Antoine was feeling better and on the 15th joined Thomas and Florence for a partial new route on Toro Peak, which they called Positive Vibes (300m, 7a). [Three routes reach the left edge of a large roof toward the lower left side of the south face. In 2009 Poles reached it from the left and continued above to create the 300m Get Up in the Morning. In 2017 a New Zealand pair climbed more or less direct to the roof, while Positive Vibes reaches it from the right and then climbs though the roof for the crux pitch. Above the roof, all routes appear to follow more or less the same ground.]

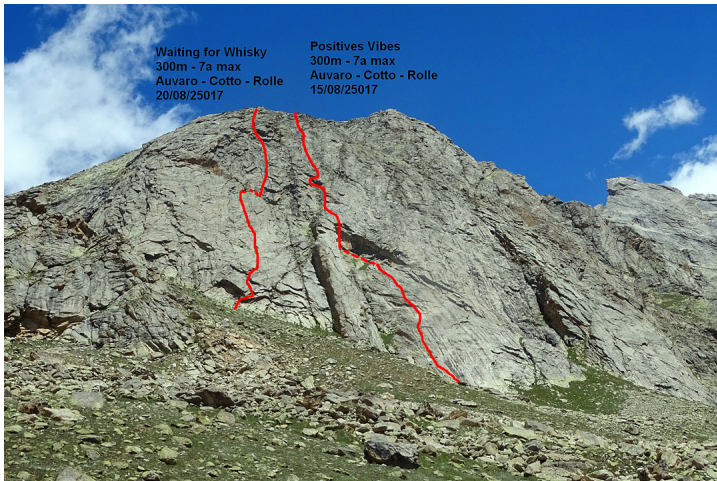
After this the three attempted to free climb a line on the north-northwest flank of Castle Peak, home to the big-wall routes Sharp Knife of Tolerance (Slovakian, 2002) and 7 D'espases (Catalan, 2005). However, after a couple of pitches they found the rock too poor for free climbing. They returned to Toro Peak and on the 20th climbed Waiting for Whisky (300m, 7a) on the wall left of Positive Vibes. [This lies immediately right of the 2017 New Zealand route Who Gives a Shit, which finishes after five pitches.] They also returned to Goya Peak, and on the 22nd climbed Crystal Palace (200m, 7a) on the wall left of Spherotoniose. Both routes featured magnificent granite.

During this time, Muriel and I walked two days up the Chhudong Glacier and climbed a new summit, a fine pyramid that we named Chodong (Chhudong) Devling (5,750m). The peak lies on the true right bank of the glacier (the left side looking up the glacier), and we climbed the 700m east face at 6b. We

found pitons from a previous attempt up to the middle section of the route, where it becomes very steep, but above that nothing. We circumvented the steep section by climbing a hidden ice gully to the right (75°). We finished up a yellow pillar to the small, snowy summit, which we reached at dark. We rappelled our route through the night and safely reached our tent the following morning.

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Images



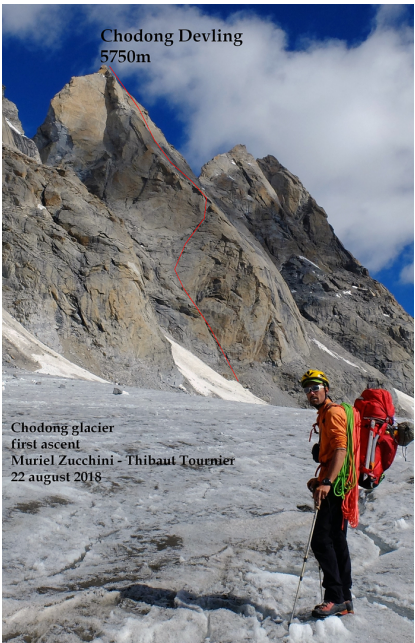
The two new French routes, Waiting for Whisky and Positive Vibes, on the left side of Toro Peak's south face.



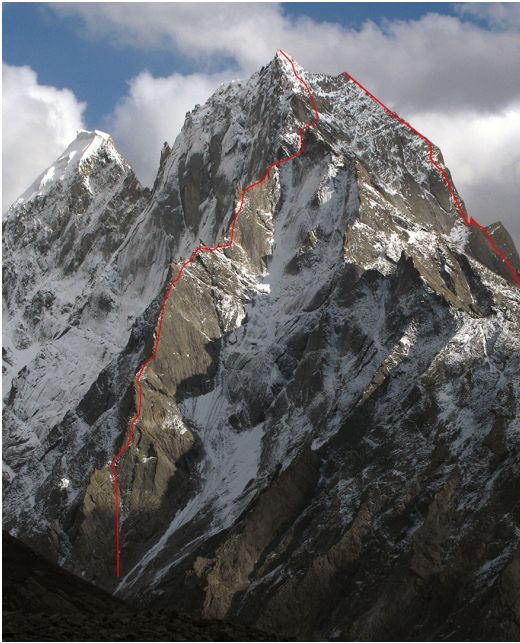
Seen from the Miyar Valley to the south: (A) Lammergeier Spire, (B) Marikula Killa's west top, a.k.a. Miyar Shivling. (C) Marikula Killa. (D) James Peak.



The 1,000m west buttress of the west summit (dubbed Miyar Shivling) of Marikula Killa, climbed by Spicy Night (6a).



Chodung (Chhudong) Devling on the west side of the upper Chhudong Glacier and the line of the 2017 first ascent via the 700m east face.



Marikula Killa (5,755m) from the north (Jangpar) side. The pillar facing the camera was climbed by Ian Dring and Martin Moran in 2016 (AAJ 2017). The right skyline leading to the west top is Spicy Night (French, 2017). On the right edge of the image are Lammergeier Spire and, to its left, the sharp Nissart Tower. The 2017 route climbed between the two. The flat-topped corniced summit to the left is James Peak, climbed from the north in 2016 (5,870m GPS).

Article Details

Author	Thibaut Tournier
Publication	AAJ
Volume	60
Issue	92
Page	0
Copyright Date	2018
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions