



AAC Publications

Chhopa Bamare, Northeast Ridge

Nepal, Rolwaling Himal

Chhopa Bamare (6,109m, 28°3'32.05"N, 86°5'28.50"E) is the highest peak of the Pamali Range, a small subgroup in the northwest Rolwaling (east of the Friendship Highway between Zhangmu and Nyalam). It is a quiet area with almost no recorded climbing history, despite a relatively short approach.

Since the first ascent of the peak in 2019 (see AAJ 2020), by the southeast face and south ridge, there has only been one reported visit, in December 2023, when a group of Sherpas claimed to have made the “first ascent.” This was clearly not accurate, and both first ascensionists, Benjamin Billet (France) and John Kelley (USA), say the summit video provided by the Nepalese absolutely was not shot on the summit. [It is thought they climbed a lower peak much farther south; see brief report [here](#).]

In the fall of 2024, Akitugu Konishi, Kotaro Kunimune, Yukio Ueda, and I initially planned to climb two independent direct routes on the southeast face. However, the face had far less snow than we expected, and the rock looked dangerous, as did the glacier approach. We quickly decided the only feasible route under the conditions was the northeast ridge.

From our base camp at 3,500m, we first established an advanced base at 4,000m and then, on November 2, climbed to Camp 1 (5,000m), close to the base of a couloir leading to a notch on the northeast ridge. For acclimatization, we climbed along the ridge toward the summit, traversing scree to avoid a rocky point we named Yak’s Back, then up a wall leading to the Dome at 5,450m. We returned to 5,250m, spent a night, then descended to base camp, where Yukio decided not to continue due to poor health.

The remaining three of us left base camp on the 10th with enough food and fuel for five to six days and arrived at Camp 1 by 2 p.m. The next day we regained our 5,450m high point—a vast plateau between the Dome and the subsummit we called Snow Peak—and made our Camp 2. The wall below the Dome gave nerve-wracking climbing on very poor rock.

On the 12th, we climbed six mixed pitches to the top of Snow Peak, descended a knife-edge snow ridge on the far side, then continued up the main ridge, which proved steeper than expected. We spent the night at 5,750m, just below a formation we called the Pinnacle. We were unable to pitch the tent and had to sleep in separate spots. Fortunately, although it was cold, there was almost no wind. In the morning, we took the bare minimum and headed for the summit.

The Pinnacle proved straightforward, but above lay a steep rock ridge. Up to this point, we had seen scattered remains of rappel anchors, but above was nothing. It seemed very likely an unknown party had turned back near here. [These possibly were left by American John Kelley, who tried the ridge, solo, in December 2017.] We continued to the upper wall, which gave the steepest and most difficult pitches of the route (M5). A slushy snow slope brought us to the summit, which we reached at 4:30 p.m. We were back at our bivouac by 8:30 p.m.

The next day, we reversed the ascent route and were off the mountain by 9 p.m. Due to the horizontal distance involved, the ups and downs, and the complex terrain, the route felt like proper “Himalayan mountaineering” more than alpine climbing. We named the route Tsumiki (a type of Japanese toy

building block) after the fragile rock.

—**Hiroyoshi Manome, Japan**

Images



Looking up the final section of the northeast ridge of Chhopa Bamare to the summit headwall and crux of the route.



Chhopa Bamare (6,109m), showing (green) the original route up the southeast face and south ridge (2019) and (red) the 2024 route along the northeast ridge.



The view from the flank of "Snow Peak" along the sharp northeast ridge leading to the summit of Chhopa Bamare (6,109m). The highest camp, at 5,750 meters, was on the ridge beyond the saddle.



Mixed climbing on the headwall of the northeast ridge of Chhopa Bamare.



On the summit of Chhopa Bamare. In the distance, the big peaks are (left to right) Cho Oyu, Everest, Menlungtse, and Gaurishankar.

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