



## AAC Publications

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### **Rongdo Valley, various first ascents**

India, East Karakoram

A team of 12 mountaineers from the Indian Air Force, plus Sherpas, explored the little-known Rongdo Valley in May–June, summiting seven peaks, of which six were above 6,000m. Only two mountaineering expeditions have visited this region before (AAJ 2006 and 2013). We established our first base camp at 4,791m (34°30'02.7"N, 77°57'13.8"E), 45 minutes walk above the hot springs.

Our first peak was Sa'i Lhamo (6,030m, 34°31'34.2"N, 77°58'03.7"E), the Tibetan term for the Earth goddess. Thirteen members summited on May 18 by the southwest ridge. On the 21st another 13 members attempted Lungkhor Kangri (map height 6,160m), a peak northeast of the head of the Tiburchung Glacier (the northwestern fork of the upper Rongdo). Climbing the 45° northwest ridge, they reached a height of 5,990m before bad weather drove them back. This appears to be the same peak as that climbed in 2012 by Andy Selters and Nangang Bhote, via the southwest ridge, and named Gazgazi.

The entire team then moved up the main valley and established a second base camp at 34°30'32.2"N, 77°58'31.4"E. A peak in the massif east of the Southeast Shukpka Kunchang Glacier was the next target, and 13 members left for the summit on the 25th. Climbing via a south spur, and then a north-facing slope, they reached the main ridge, which they followed east to the top (6,183m, 6,100m map height, 34°32'45.7"N, 77°59'17.0"E). The peak was named Khyung Kangri.

The following day a different 13 members climbed a peak to the northwest of Khyung Kangri, naming it Chu Skeyes Kangri (Lotus Peak in Tibetan, 6,053m, 34°33.044'N, 77°58'0.507"E). A 50m section toward the top steepened to 60°. This team was back at summit camp by 8 a.m. Taking advantage of a lull in the weather, they had a quick breakfast and went off to attempt another top to the southwest, on the northeastern flanks of Sa'i Lhamo. Three hours later, via the east spur, they were on the summit, naming it Langpoche (Elephant Head, 5,968m, 34°32.178'N, 77°58'0.507"E).

Bad weather prompted us to go down to the hot springs, and when it cleared we decided to concentrate on the Chudon Nangma Valley (rising southeast of the main valley) and another side valley, the Shan Lung, further south.

Moving up the Chudon Nangma, we split into three teams and climbed Odgsal I (Clear Light, 6,234m, 34°27'37.8"N, 78°02'32.1"E), Odgsal II (6,028m), immediately to its west, and Charok Kangri (Vulture, 6,122m, 34°29.343'N, 77°59.826'E). Perhaps our greatest achievement was accomplishing all this exploration without mishap or anyone falling ill.

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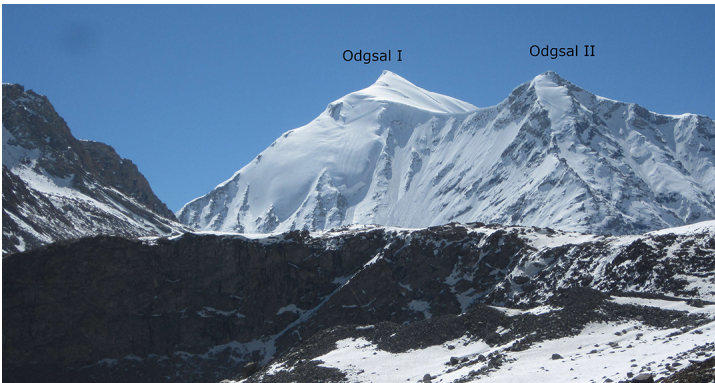
## Images



Looking northwest from Charok Kangri.



Charok Kangri from the south.



Looking approximately southeast at the Odgsal peaks.

## Article Details

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