



AAC Publications

Darkot to Chiantar Glacier Ski Tour

Pakistan, Hindu Raj

In 2019, on my 35th expedition since 1993, I was able to get a permit to lead a group (11 French, two Poles, and one Pakistani) to visit the upper eastern end of the Chiantar Glacier. In 1967 a German expedition penetrated the upper Chiantar, where they climbed the highest peak, Koh-i-Chiantar (6,416m). Since that time, in more than 50 years, no climbers have reached the head of the glacier. [While it is true that no climbers appear to have traveled up the Chiantar to its head since that era, a series of Italian expeditions, starting in 1997, climbed numerous mountains surrounding the Chiantar basin, approaching from Karambar Lake to the north or via passes from the south.]

Traveling by road from Chitral, on April 27 we reached Chikar in the Boroghil Valley, close to the route that leads north, over Boroghil Pass, to Afghanistan. The following day we used porters to help us move to 3,500m on the Darkot Glacier. For the next 13 days we moved autonomously on skis, pulling everything we needed in pulks.

Once we reached Darkot Pass, we began exploring glacier corridors that would take us eastward to the Chiantar Glacier, the biggest glacier of either the Hindu Kush or Hindu Raj (30km in length). We crossed four passes and then descended the Garmush Glacier, arriving on the Chiantar on May 6. It had been an exciting journey but a logical route.

We then continued east and reached a point at the head of the glacier at around 5,100m, not far from Koh-i-Chiantar. From there we skied back down the glacier and out to the Boroghil Valley, reaching the village of Lashkargaz on May 11.

We found the mountains and glaciers impressive—there is still a lot to do in this area. I hope our expedition will contribute to a resurgence of interest in this remote area of Pakistan. The locals are all Wakhis—peaceful Ismaili Muslims—and the area is far from any Taliban.

– Pierre Neyret, France

Images



Looking south up the Garmush Glacier, with Garmush Zom (6,244m, 36°42'36.3"N, 73°35'07.8"E) on the right. Garmush Zom was climbed in 1975 by an Austrian expedition via the west ridge, not visible in this photo. It was last climbed in 2007 by Koreans from the south and the upper west ridge.



The northeast face of the probably unclimbed Peak 6,177m (approximately 36°42'47.6"N, 73°42'31.7"E). This is the most easterly main peak in the upper Garmush Glacier cwm.



Skiing the upper Chiantar Glacier, with Koh-i-Chatiboi (6,150m) behind. Chatiboi was climbed by Alfred Linsbauer, Wolfgang Greimal, and Günter Plötz from a 1968 German expedition.



Seen from the northwest, Koh-i-Chiantar (6,416m) at the head of the Chiantar Glacier, first climbed in August 1967 by Germans Peter von Gizycki and Günter Plötz. They approached up the Chiantar Glacier but then circled around the mountain to climb the south face.



Skiing down from Garmush Pass to Garmush Glacier, with unclimbed summits on the north ridge of Garmush Zom behind.



Unnamed and unclimbed Peak 5,564m ($36^{\circ}43'23.24''\text{N}$, $73^{\circ}30'51.48''\text{E}$) above the second glacier cirque east of the Darkot pass.



A rest stop below unnamed Peak 5,665m ($36^{\circ}47'45.46''\text{N}$, $73^{\circ}47'59.93''\text{E}$) on the north bank of the Chiantar Glacier.



Unnamed Peak 5,600m ($36^{\circ}43'11.22''\text{N}$, $73^{\circ}47'20.41''\text{E}$), seen from the northwest. This peak lies on the eastern rim of the last glacier basin opening to the south before reaching the upper Chiantar Glacier cirque.



Unclimbed Chiantar Central Pyramid (5,336m, $36^{\circ}44'22.96''\text{N}$, $73^{\circ}48'40.08''\text{E}$), which lies right in the center of the upper Chiantar Glacier basin.



Peak Karka (6,222m), in the upper Chiantar Glacier basin, seen from the northwest. This peak lies on the rim of the Chiantar, a little to the southwest of Koh-i-Chiantar. It was climbed over three days in 2007 by an Italian expedition, via the northeast face at ED+.



Looking west from the Darkot Glacier to Koyo Zom (6,877m, the highest peak in the Hindu Raj). The east ridge, the route of the first ascent (1968), faces the camera. This route was descended to the Pechus Glacier (hidden) by the 2019 team that climbed the northwest face.



Route of the 2019 French ski expedition to the Chiantar Glacier in the Hindu Raj. The route and camps are shown; the skiers generally proceeded counter-clockwise from far left, making a trip to the head of the glacier.

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