



AAC Publications

Tashispa Ri, North Ridge

India, East Karakoram

Rajesh Gadgil near the head of the Lung Tung Glacier with unclimbed peaks 6,160m (left) and 6,190m to the southwest. Photo by Divyesh Muni

“Why would the cattle go through so much trouble, just for some grass?” exclaimed Abhijit. After ascending 950m and then having to descend almost 400m over steep scree slopes and rocky slabs, precariously hanging a few hundred metres over a fast-flowing stream, he could not fathom why the villagers sent their cattle to graze here in the Satti Valley. It was Abhijit’s first visit to the East Karakoram, and he was getting introduced to a typical trek to base camp.

Our team from the Himalayan Club consisted of Abhijit Dandekar, Rajesh Gadgil, Atin Sathe, and I, supported by Pasang Bhote, Pasang Sherpa Pemba Norbu, Phuphu Dorje, Sangbu Sherpa, and a team of low-altitude porters from Nepal. We had visited the valley in 2005, during an Indo-American expedition (see AAJ 2006), and had explored the glaciers and peaks at the northeastern end. We now planned to explore the Lung Tung Nala in the southwestern section.

We arrived at Satti Village (3,300m) in the Nubra Valley on July 26, 2019. Ascending the Satti Valley brought us to a high point of 4,250m, from where we had to descend diagonally to the river at 3,900m and our planned intermediary camp. It was this loose scree and rock that had prompted Abhijit’s remark, and at several points we were forced to down-climb slabs overhanging the river below. It was nerve-racking work, even with light loads on our backs. Moving all our equipment over such precarious terrain was a logistical nightmare, and required the help of a team of 15 support staff. The route was prone to rockfall if it rained, so even in the slightest showers we had to stay put. As a result, we were only able to move to the intermediary camp on the 29th.

After a difficult river crossing, we reached base camp at 4,823m on August 1. We were now at the junction of the Spang Chenmo and Lung Tung valleys. On the 6th, after reconnaissance and load carrying, we moved to an advanced base at 5,300m on the terminal moraine of the Lung Tung Glacier.

Next day we climbed onto the glacier to be met by an awesome view. On the left rim were peaks 6,489m, 6,277m, and—furthest away—Peak 6,104m. The right-hand rim, running southwest then west from Peak 6,104m, held peaks 6,160m, 6,190m, and 6,170m. I felt like a child on my birthday. So many gifts to be opened!

On the 11th, all but Abhijit, who needed to return to Mumbai, shifted to a high camp at 5,900m, safe from any rockfall or avalanche and with a good view of the peaks in the Rongdo Valley. On the 12th we climbed Peak 6,104m at the head of the Lung Tung Glacier (34°30'6.93"N, 77°53'15.25"E) to help us acclimatize before attempting more difficult objectives. Our five Sherpas, together with Atin, Rajesh, and I, ascended easily for 150m onto the northwest ridge, which we followed to the summit, arriving at 11 a.m.

As we rested next day, the weather deteriorated, and it snowed for part of that day and the next. Things looked uncertain, and I decided to head back to Mumbai due to a personal commitment. Atin and Rajesh opted to wait it out, but the weather became even worse, and in heavy snowfall they made a difficult descent to base camp. Occasional small breaks in the weather then allowed them to shift loads to Satti, and they reached Leh on the 22nd.

We had been lucky to climb Peak 6,104m on one of the few days of good weather during the trip, so we decided to name it Tashispa Ri, meaning “good fortune peak.”

– **Divyesh Muni**, Himalayan Club, India

Images



Karpo Kangri (6,540m, center) and Buk Buk (6,289m, snow dome on right) seen from the southwest on the approach up the Satti Valley. In 2005, an Indo-American team reached the 6,525m central summit of Karpo Kangri and climbed Buk Buk.



Unclimbed Peak 6,170m immediately south of advanced base and on the southern rim of the Lung Tung Glacier.



Rajesh Gadgil near the head of the Lung Tung Glacier with unclimbed peaks 6,160m (left) and 6,190m to the southwest.



Unclimbed Peak 6,489m on the northern rim of the Lung Tung Glacier. It is the highest peak accessible from this glacier basin.



Descending steep scree to the valley floor, where the entire Satti River is channelled into this narrow chasm.



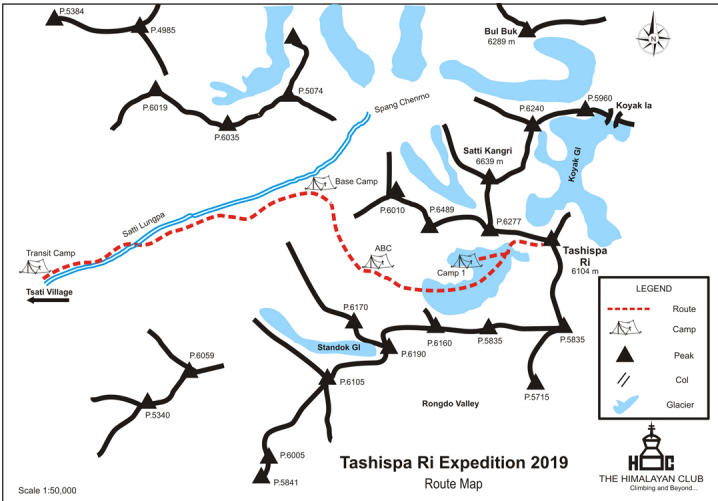
Unclimbed Peak 6,277m seen from the southwest. The side glacier flows south from the mountain into the main Lung Tung.



Setting out for Tashispa Ri, which was climbed by the left skyline (northwest ridge).



On the upper northwest ridge of Tashispa Ri.



Map of the 2019 expedition to the Satti Lungpa valley and the first ascent of Tashispa Ri.

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