



Chachacomani, Southeast Ridge, Historical Notes

Bolivia, Cordillera Real

Looking northwest from the glacier west of Jankho Laya in 1996. From left to right, Jakoceri, Chachacomani, and the various summits of the Tres Marias. Photo by Angela Goodacre Donini
AAJ 2020 contained an account of several climbs on and near Chachacomani (6,074m). In a photo of Chachacomani's south face, one line is labeled "first ascent unknown." In 1996, I was part of the party that probably did the first ascent of this route.

In late May, Cesar Humberto (Tito) Carrasco, the guides Gregorio and Eduardo Mamani Quispe, and I drove from Peñas to Paso Mollu Apacheta and from there hiked northwest 4km to below the southern flanks of Jankho Laya (5,545m). Next day, moving from moraine to glacier, we climbed to a 5,200m col to the west of Jankho Laya's northern top. On the far side, we roped to descend the glacier snout into the Huarca Juahiri Valley, where we established base camp. From there, we visited the Tres Marias for an acclimatization climb.

On the 30th we hiked 4km to a camp on the col between Chachacomani and Himaciña (5,458m). We set off before dawn the following day for the left flank of the southeast ridge. After crossing the bergschrund, we climbed a 300m, 60–70° ice slope. We continued up the corniced crest to reach a snowfield and a steep 20m step that led to the summit ridge and finally the east (and highest) top of Chachacomani. We had planned to continue southwest along the ridge to the western top, but on finding crevasses we opted to reverse our route.

Tito and I had met the Mamani brothers in 1992 through the Club Andino Boliviano. They grew up in Zongo village, and their affinity for the mountains was spurred by encounters with foreign climbers. In 1993, Tito returned to Bolivia and persuaded the two guides to diverge from their "day jobs" and try the west face of Huayna Potosí. They were the first Bolivians to complete this challenging ice route and went on to achieve international accreditation as mountain guides.

Tito was killed by rockfall in El Potrero Chico, Mexico, almost exactly one year after our ascent of Chachacomani (see AAJ 2000). A short time ago, when I reached out to Eduardo to talk about our ascent of the southeast ridge, I found him disheartened by the death in July 2020 of his older brother, Gregorio, from COVID-19. In his grief, he finds himself instinctively calling his brother from the mountains whenever he has a cell signal.

— Angela Goodacre Donini, USA

Images



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Approaching Chachacomani base camp in 1996, looking back at the northwest face of Jankho Laya (5,545m). It's not clear whether this face has been climbed, but an ascent of the skyline spur above the 5,200-meter col on the right was made in 1979 by French climbers.



Gregorio Mamani returning from an attempt to scout a descent along the southwest ridge of Chachacomani and then down the west or northwest slopes. His cries of “grietes” (crevasses) prompted a retreat down the ascent route.



Looking up the final section of the southeast ridge to the east (main) summit of Chachacomani.



Chachacomani as seen from Himaciña to the south-southeast. Jakoceri to the left. (1) Approximate line of the original 1947 route (approx. AD, Buccholtz-Fritz-Moeller-Moore-Paz-Sanjines). (2) Established south face line with unknown history (approx. AD 55°). (3) Mix-von Ungern Route (2019). (4) South face direct (D- 60°, Ivanek-Soria, 1998). (5) Southeast ridge (Carrasco-Goodacre-Mamani-Mamani, 1996, AD 60–70°). (6) Southeast buttress (D UIAA V 70°, Bartram-Culberson-Hall-Koehler, 1989).

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