

would be extremely difficult and foolish to cross here, especially as a much easier pass lies a short distance to the east, between Pk 6,038m and Pk 6,075m.

Shipton in 1934 used the Shrak La to cross into the Arwa valley. While there he ascended a peak from the pass, describing it as an “interesting ridge climb” that allowed him to get a “hang of the geography of the Arwa glaciers on to which we were about to descend.” It is not possible to definitively identify this peak, as his altimeter was not working correctly. It is likely he climbed either Pk 6,075m or Pk 6,038m, which border the col. Suffice to say that Pk 6,038m has what appears to be an interesting ridge and would provide excellent views of the Arwa glaciers. The col’s location is important, as the mountain to the right of it is called Shri Parvat. This means Pk 6,075m is Shri Parvat, and not Pk 6,175 as labeled in Kapadia’s texts.

Our own expedition established a camp at the foot of Pk 6,175m on April 11, and on the morning of the 13th used the southeast ridge to ascend over easy mixed ground and gain the right-hand side of its upper face. This was sustained Scottish III all the way. At 4 p.m. on April 13 Michael McCann, Gustau Catalan, Alan Manning, Sara Spencer, and I reached the summit. We set about a difficult abseil descent taking 14 hours (throughout the night), following a gully on the south face of the east ridge.

Data was gathered from all participants in relation to the medical research study. The film crew, Connor Kane, Alan Manning, and Angus Mitchel, also had a successful expedition achieving all their objectives. The Bhagirath Kharak glacier is a remote valley that has not seen much activity. It has many beautiful unclimbed and unnamed peaks. These are quite accessible and have many potential routes with a vast range of difficulties.

ROGER MCMORROW, *Ireland*

CENTRAL GARHWAL—GANGOTRI

Chaukhamba II, first ascent of the southwest face. One summer day in 2002 my friends and I decided on the Garhwal as our fall expedition destination. Researching it, we chose Chaukhamba II, the most remote summit of the region. With the help of a small photo of the pillar we intended to climb, more preparations followed until at the end of August, Patrick Wagnon, Christian Tromsdorff, Greg Sauget, and I packed up and were off. After a long guiding season we were all eager to go on an adventure to discover a new region and perhaps an unclimbed route in the particularly fascinating area of the Garhwal, a cultural and spiritual sanctuary at the source of the Ganges.

We got off to a slow start. Ten days of bad weather at the beginning of September dumped more than one meter of snow at 4,300m. Luckily the Indian agency had prepared our voyage so well that the patience of our staff and the creativity of the cooks made the waiting bearable. Tapovan (4,300m), a two-day walk from the road head at Gangotri, is the communal base camp for all climbs in this region. It’s also a meditation area. At the foot of Shivling we shared our camp with climbers, pilgrims, and sadhus meditating in the caves.

Although our local porters refused to cross the glacier, our staff from the agency (cook, etc.) offered to take their place. Because of them, three days later we installed our advanced base at 5,300m at the end of the long flat Gangotri glacier.

It was only there that we caught sight of the west pillar of Chaukhamba II. All the information we had for this route had been gathered from a small photo. Now, we could see it. Just

to get to this point had already been a complicated logistical affair. After acclimatizing, we decided to climb the west pillar in a style that was half big wall and half alpine.

During our first attempt we realized that we were carrying way too much; 200m up the haul bag broke. An ascent in this style wasn't going to work. We descended and modified our chosen itinerary in order to be able to travel lighter and therefore faster. We needed to adapt the route to alpine style, so we changed our line to the right of the pillar on the south west face. On October 3 we set off from advanced base. The climb, on a 50°–60° snow slope with occasional ice cliffs, wasn't too difficult (approximately alpine grade D). After a bivouac at 6,400m, we continued the second day up a long slope to the summit (7,070m), where we spent the night.

But that was only part one. We still had to descend. Down-climbing 1,600m of 50°–60°+ some rappelling didn't really appeal to us, so we decided we would traverse the ridge to Chaukhamba I and descend its gentler snow slopes. We made this decision from what we could see of the route, realizing we would be venturing a little into the unknown. While traversing the ridge, it started to snow. At around 6,700m, we found a short-cut. It seemed that three or four rappels would take us to a col, from which we could easily descend to advanced base. Late that evening we arrived at the unnamed col and spent our third night above 6,000m. The following morning, lethargic from the previous day, we only left our bivouac at noon. The clouds were already on their way. Half an hour later we were in a storm. To make matters worse, the itinerary down to the glacier wasn't as straightforward as it had seemed. Seracs made it dangerous and bad weather made it difficult to find the correct route. But around 5 p.m., in 30cm of fresh snow, we finally arrived at our camp, where our staff were waiting for us, all ready to go for the 15-hour trek back to Tapovan the following morning.

Now back in Chamonix, I should reiterate how climbing in remote areas like this requires a lot of foresight. Even though the actual ascent wasn't very technical, we wouldn't have succeeded in climbing this summit if we hadn't been flexible. Since we didn't have a lot of prior information, we had to be ready to adapt our plan to the circumstances and be prepared and willing to make changes.

YANNICK GRAZIANI, *France*

Januhut, attempt. The Austrian team of Josef Jochler and Christian Zenz were the first party to attempt this 6,807m peak. Following the usual Gangotri-Tapovan approach, they established base camp on May 19, then reached the head of the long Gangotri Glacier in early June. However, they had plenty of porter problems due too-heavy snow cover on the glacier and, later, bad weather intervened, causing some cold injury to the fingers of one member. No serious attempt was made on the peak

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

Swachand, first ascent of west face and second ascent of peak. This year's post-monsoon season in the Gangotri region of the Garhwal was greatly affected by a mid-September dump of three to four feet of snow. Climbing expeditions focusing on east- or north-facing snow or ice routes were unable even to start their routes. Our project, the unclimbed 1,400m west face of Swachand (6,721m), caught the sun in the afternoon, allowing the snow to consolidate.

Swachand is situated in a side valley approximately 25km up the Gangotri Glacier from