

During the same period, the men's team started work on the imposing north face of Armin Peak (a.k.a. Amin Brakk, 5800m), previously attempted by a Spanish team. They were on the peak from August 2-6 before deciding that they did not have sufficient time to make a serious impression on the featureless granite nose. They then switched their efforts to a neighboring wall, Nawaz Brakk (5600m), where they established a new route that followed a 1000-meter line at 5.11 A3+. A portaledge camp was set up after 500 meters of initial slabs. From here the route followed a major corner system to the top of the wall, with some of the hardest climbing in the top few pitches. They were on and off it between August 8-23, with probably 13 days of climbing in total. They used fixed rope below and above the portaledge camp. The route gave the team a lot of free climbing on the lower half and mostly aid on the upper half.

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*Changi Tower North Peak, First Ascent.* Changi Tower (ca. 5800m) (the actual height of Changi Tower was difficult to assess, firstly because of the poor-quality maps [all maps greater than 1:50,000 are classified as restricted military information], and secondly because the altimeter was lost) is located in the Nangma Valley, Baltistan, which is in the northern provinces of Pakistan. It is approximately an eight-hour walk from Khande village, which is six hours' drive from Skardu. Changi Tower is part of the larger Armin massif, an enormous granite block in the upper reaches of the Nangma Valley. The Armin massif includes Armin Peak, Changi Tower, and several other unclimbed spires. Most of the rock within Nangma Valley is either granite, gneiss, or schist; however, the predominant rock type is granite, and there is lots of it.

In August, Ned Norton (New Zealand) and I climbed *Just A Quickie* (VI 5.10+ A0) on Changi Tower North Peak, while Vera Wong, Nicola Woolford (New Zealand) and Abby Watkins (New Zealand) made the first ascent of *Excess Baggage* (VI 5.10+A2+) (see note below) on Changi Tower Main Peak (ca. 5820m). The routes head up the east face of Changi Tower, and both begin in a short couloir exposed to rock- and icefall from the "Off-White Spider," a classic spider-shaped snow patch midway up the east face. The couloir then doglegs left parallel to the face and the routes follow this to a small saddle and Camp I.

On *Just A Quickie*, from Camp I a short 100-meter traverse to the south intercepts a diagonal right-trending crack system that terminates two pitches short of the Spider. Climbing ranged from 5.7 to 5.10c with good bivy ledges located between the fifth and sixth pitches. This section took four days to climb and Camp II was established at the base of the Spider.

The route from Camp II took two days and proceeded directly up the center of the Spider before traversing right along a snow ledge to the prow of the North Buttress, where the high bivy was established. This section was prone to rockfall and cornice collapse, especially the central gully (these cornices were the same ones that hazarded Wong, Woolford and Watkins during their ascent of *Excess Baggage*). Climbing tended to be mixed rock and ice with one short waterfall section. The first pitch on the North Buttress was 5.10d and we pulled on pro to get through the crux. The remaining eight rock pitches ranged from 5.8 to 5.10c. The final pitch from the top of the buttress to the north summit was a snow ramp. We negotiated it in friction shoes, having left all our ice equipment two pitches below, and reached the summit at 7 p.m. The descent down in the dark took five hours to the high bivy. It then took another two days to return to Base Camp, ten days in total after departing.

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