

make a detailed reconnaissance of our intended route and the north face. The site of our first planned camp on the face, a small bergshrund above the lower seracs, was at 5660m and stocked with climbing equipment and food. During our stay in the region we experienced exceptionally good weather. We left base camp on October 9 with high hopes of someday returning to our chosen objective. Our base camp cooks from Shikhar Travels, liaison officer, and porters could not have been more helpful and friendly.

JACK ROBERTS AND CARLOS BUHLER, AAC

*Lampak II (6181m), ascent.* All seven members of an Indian expedition led by Swaraj Ghosh made the probable third ascent of this peak between the Siruanch and Kalla Glaciers above the road head at Malari. Base camp was established on August 29 at 4500m and the summit reached via the southeast ridge on September 5. Apart from the leader the other summiteers, all from West Bengal, were Sibrata Banerjee, B. Biswas, Gautam Chatterjee, Anal Das, B. Jetty, and N. P. Rao.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

*Siruanch Glacier, Shambhu Ka Qilla, first ascent.* On May 16 six members of a British expedition, Roland Arnison, Angela Benham, Chris Drinkwater, Titch Kavanagh, Andy Phillips, and myself (leader) made the first ascent of a previously unnamed peak approximately five kilometers north of Tirsuli on the eastern boundary of the Siruanch Glacier. In doing so we became the first mountaineers, and most probably the first humans, to visit the upper glacier regions below the north side of Tirsuli West. Despite full IMF permission, we were still forced to spend four days in Joshimath before the civil authorities there sanctioned an Inner Line Permit. Then, from the normal road head at Malari (ca 3000m) we spent over a week exploring a suitable route into the Siruanch Gad before eventually setting up base camp on May 2 quite low down in the valley at an area called Chilkuan (ca 3600m). We were almost certainly the first non-Indian mountaineering group to enter this valley since the 1950 Scottish expedition.

Our expedition had a permit for the then-unclimbed Tirsuli West (7035m). The north side of this peak is a 2500-meter high very broad snow/ice face almost entirely composed of a jumble of seracs, hanging glaciers, and steep rock buttresses. These are capped by large cornices on the long summit ridge. It was soon concluded that an objectively safe line did not exist and we turned our attention to a side glacier to the north, which at its head held an attractive peak on the watershed ridge south of Uja Tirche.

After clearing permission for the climb with our liaison officer, a camp was established at ca 5400m in the upper glacier basin below the south face of the unnamed peak, and a potential line was identified linking a series of couloirs. Six climbers left at 9 p.m. on the 15th, and by dawn the following morning, after relatively straightforward climbing, we were grouped below the steep summit tower. The latter was climbed via a groove system in two pitches, the first being good Scottish 4. The descent went without incident until the last steep snow couloir leading down to the glacier. Here, Angela Benham slipped and fell 300 meters, hitting rocks and sustaining whip-lash injuries to neck and shoulder. We managed to get her back to camp that night and the following morning she was able to walk unladen down to Base. The ca 6160m peak was christened Shambhu Ka Qilla—the Fortress of Shiva—and the 700-meter route on the south face graded an Alpine D+. Photographs taken during the ascent seem to suggest that existing map-

ping does not accurately reflect the mountain topography in the area, especially with regard to the location of Chalab (6160m), attempted only once from the east (Girithi Ganga), in 1988.

COLIN KNOWLES, *United Kingdom*

*Tirsuli West (7035m), attempt.* In May a seven-member German team led by Ralf Messbacher attempted the west ridge, reaching ca 6320m, much the same altitude as that achieved on the only previous attempt, in 1995 by an Anglo-New Zealand party. The Germans suffered from generally bad weather whilst they were traversing the several smaller summits that characterize the lower section of this ridge, and were eventually thwarted by avalanches and very loose rock.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

*Tirsuli West (7035 m), first ascent.* A team from the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, led by its vice principal, Maj. Kulwant S. Dhami, attempted this virgin peak in June. Located ca 45 km from Jumma, the road head on the Joshimath-Malari road, it was the only remaining unclimbed 7000m+ peak in both the Garhwal and Kumaun Himalaya. NIM is a premier training institute in India and many of its instructors are famed mountaineers, who participate in such ventures.

The team established several camps, the first at the village Dunagiri on June 27, base camp at Bagini on the 28th, Camp 1 on the lateral moraine, and Camp 2 on the Bagini Glacier near the base of the mountain. The team then fixed ca 1300 meters of rope on the rock face of the southwest ridge, and established Camp 3. Climbers then stayed at Camp 2 for five days and fixed more rope, but due to hostile conditions returned to Camp 2 on July 11 and waited for the weather to clear. On July 13 they again reached Camp 3. On the 14th the route was opened to the site of Camp 4 and tents, etc., established the following day. The weather remained bad but the climbers continued to open the route and on the 17th reached the top. The summit was gained at 11:20 a.m. by seven members: the leader, Dhami, SS Bhandari, Deputy Leader Rattan Singh, Amrik Singh, Jagmohan Singh, Karamjit Singh, and Laxman Singh. A total of 3000 meters of rope was fixed. For the first time this virgin mountain unveiled glimpses of its hidden treasures to summiteers from the NIM, who live by the motto of the Institute, "Success lies in Courage."

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

*Nanda Ghunti, new route.* Martin Moran led a six-member British expedition to this 6390m peak. Moran has been a regular visitor to the Garhwal for many years, carrying out significant exploration and making a number of noteworthy ascents. After establishing a camp at 5400m and making a reconnaissance of the mountain, Mike Brennan and the guide, Andy Nisbet, made the first ascent of the south face. The route was completed on June 2 and followed a curving couloir (50-55 degrees) between two pinnacles to reach the upper slopes. These in turn were climbed directly to the summit. The route was awarded an Alpine grade of AD+.

On the same day the rest of the team (Moran with Ian Bapty, Tom Rankin, Des Winterbone, and a local high altitude porter, H Singh), repeated the Normal route up the north ridge. This entailed a long approach from Hom Kund (4650m) over the Ronti Saddle (Ronti is a 6063m peak immediately north of Nanda Ghunti). Most of the route was straightforward,