

SPITI

Upper Pare Chu Valley, Pks. 6,206 and 6,080m, first ascents; Dhhun, second ascent. Our expedition from the Tokai section of the Japanese Alpine Club left Kaza (3,600m) in the Spiti River Valley on July 23. We trekked north up the Parilungbi Valley and over the Parung La (5,580m), dropped down the far side to the snout of the Parung Glacier (at the head of the Pare Chu Valley) and established base camp at 5,200m. [This approach followed the first section of the old trade route from Spiti to the large Tso Morari (lake) in Ladakh and onwards to Leh—Ed.] In 1999, inspired by the reports of Harish Kapadia, I visited this region, and our expedition made the first ascents of Umdung Kangri (6,643m), northwest of Gya, and Dhhun (6,200m), immediately south of Parilungbi (6,166m, climbed in 1987 by Kapadia's Indian expedition) at the head of the Pakshi Lamur Glacier. On the latter we thought the peak we were climbing was Lhakhang (6,250m), our main target. We reached the summit in poor visibility and on returning home discovered that Lhakhang lay 1½km farther south of Dhhun. It remained unclimbed and seemed the perfect target for 2005.

Our expeditions characteristically include older mountaineers, who still maintain an interest in exploration despite limited physical capabilities. When we asked for applications for this trip, we received many from elderly climbers with limited experience, so we included easier unclimbed peaks around Parang La as additional targets. There are many untouched peaks in this little-known mountain area, where it is still possible to satisfy one's curiosity for exploration, though it is not the place for super-technical alpine challenges.

The team split into two parties. The first, Midori Masada (50), Kunihiko Noro (64), and I (70), attempted two peaks northwest of the Parung La. We first ascended the easy Parung Glacier and placed a camp at 5,800m. On August 2 we left at 6 a.m. and followed a snow-filled gully to the top of Pk. 6,206m (height from the Russian map). It was technically easy, and we reached the summit, with our liaison officer and a porter, in two hours. The next day Masada and Noro bagged the unclimbed 6,080m peak immediately to the southwest, by the north face. Both these peaks were previously unclimbed.

The second party, Kiyoko Kanada (50), Takako Miura (62), Kazuhiro Mizuno (58), Tatsumi Mizuno (54), and Tokutaro Yanagihara (58), left base camp on July 28 and ascended the Pakshi Lamur valley to a camp at 5,100m. On the 31st they reached the glacier snout and set up a second base camp at 5,200m. On August 1 a reconnaissance to 5,600m showed the proposed route on Lhakhang to be too avalanche-prone, so on the 3rd they set out to make the second ascent of Dhhun. They established a high camp at 5,600m and at 4:00 the following morning started up the névé-covered north face. The five Japanese climbers, the liaison officer, and four porters reached the summit at 11 a.m. Unwilling to reverse the route, because of soft snow prevailing in the afternoon, they climbed down the rocky west face, though this turned out to be harder than anticipated.

TSUNEO SUZUKI, *Japanese Alpine Club*

A review of the mountains near the head of the Pare Chu. The Pare Chu lies northeast of the Spiti River, not far from the Indo-Tibet border. Since 1995 it has been easy for foreign mountaineers to gain access to the areas west of the Spiti River, but the regions north and east are

restricted, so it is necessary to get reluctant Indian authorities to accept applications from other than local people or trekkers. There are five main venues that I would like to discuss:

(1) Peaks south of Umdung (4,880m) on the Pare Chu (river). In addition to the previously climbed peaks of Umdung Kangri (6,643m, climbed in 1999 by JAC Tokai) and Gyadung (6,160m, climbed in 1987 by Kapadia's Indian expedition) there are several unclimbed peaks, among which Pt 6,367m and Pt 6,321m are quite fascinating.

(2) Peaks north Dutung on the Pare Chu. Mountains in this area north of the Talking Valley have not been attempted. Notable peaks are 6,231m, 6,210m, 6,204m, and 6,122m.

(3) Peaks southwest of Kharsa Gongma, which is situated at the confluence of the Pare Chu and Pakshi Lamur rivers. There are two big unclimbed peaks opposite Kharsa Gongma: Pt 6,307m (6,401m on the Russian map) and Pt 6,320m a little farther east. The west and south flanks are nearly 1,000m high but composed of loose rock. The north sides look more promising, with small glaciers rising to both peaks.

(4) Peaks at the head of Pakshi Lamur. The glacier at the head of this valley is rather large compared to those in neighboring areas. It is surrounded by five peaks: Parilungbi (6,166m, climbed in 1987 by Indians), Dhhun (6,200m, climbed in 1999 and 2005 by JAC Tokai) and three unclimbed peaks, Lhakhang (6,205m), Pt 6,228m, and Pt 6,247m.

(5) Peaks surrounding the head of a side glacier west of the main Pakshi Lamur Glacier. There are four peaks here, two of which, Pts 6,240m and 6,100m, were climbed by an Indian (Bengal) party in 2004. The other two are beautiful, unclimbed, snow-covered mountains of 6,181m and 6,160m.

TSUNEO SUZUKI, *Japanese Alpine Club*

KINNAUR

Pts 6,132m and 6,154m, first ascents. These previously unclimbed mountains are situated at the head of the Armasong Nala, which drains into the Baspa River. A 13-member team from West Bengal led by N. Prasad Rao traveled via Sangla, Chhitkul, and Dunthi in the Baspa Valley to a base camp at Nithal Thach (4,380m) on the banks of the Armasong Nala. They established two further camps at 4,880m and 5,560m. From the highest camp both peaks were climbed on the same day, August 19, by the leader with Subrata Banerjee, Bimal Krishna Biswas, Sanjoy Ghosh, Somnath Hazara, Ajoy Mondal, Molay Mukherjee, and Dilip Tirky with four high-altitude porters: Kolbahadur, Lalbadhur, Balwant Singh and Himmat Singh.

There are few 6,000m peaks in the Baspa. The Indo-Tibet Border Police have been active in the area for many years, and some of their officers have written authentically about the valley. However, there does not appear to be any written record of their reported ascents of the three high peaks north of Dunthi.

HARISH KAPADIA, *Honorary Editor, The Himalayan Journal*

GANGOTRI

Meru Central (Shark's Fin), east face, attempt. The Korea Meru Peak Expedition comprised Kim Sae-jung and Cho U-ryeong from the Extreme Leader Alpine Club, Lee Sang-woo and Jang