



Will Sim with K7 (directly behind); Link Sar on the right. (Jonathan Griffith)

Denis Urubko and Simone Moro attempted the first winter ascent of **Nanga Parbat** by a variant of the *Kinshofer Route* on the Diamir Face, but were forced to retreat from around 6600m in early February due to heavy new snow and very high winds.

American climbers Kyle Dempster and Hayden Kennedy had a productive summer in the Karakoram. On the east face of **K7** (6934m) in the Charakusa valley, they completed an 1800m steep mixed new route in a 49-hour push with Slovenian Urban Novak, a line they had attempted in 2011. They estimated the standard at M6/AI5. Dempster, Kennedy and Josh Wharton then climbed the south face of the **Ogre** (7285m), a line attempted by a French party in 2011 and involving a long traverse on very poor rock to reach the upper south-west ridge. This was a 2700m route which they graded M6, 5.9, AI3.

Frenchmen Mathieu Maynadier, Bletton Antoine, Pierre Labbre and Sebastien successfully climbed a new line up the south-west face of **Latok II** (7108m), between 2 and 5 June at a standard of M5, ED-. This was the fifth route up the peak.

Britons Jon Griffith and Will Sim spent almost six weeks in the Charakusa valley, attempting the north face of **Link Sar** (7041m). They reached around 6200m on this so far unclimbed peak between K7 and K6. They made an ascent of **Sulu Peak** (6050m), north-west of K7 West, by its own north-west ridge, a route of around AD+ which had almost certainly been climbed before.

Russians Sergey Nilov, Dmitry Golovchenko, and Alexander Lange successfully climbed a difficult new route up the north-east buttress of the **Mustagh Tower** over 17 days, fixing very little rope. They descended by a largely snow and ice line to the west of their ascent route, making it back to their base camp in 24 hours from the summit, with no food or fuel left.

Rick Allen's report of the Mazeno Ridge climb appears on page 3 and the Polish Gasherbrum I winter ascent report is on page 15.

HARISH KAPADIA

India 2011-12

India 2011

A total of 40 foreign climbing expeditions visited India in 2011 of which 21 were to easy and routine peaks. Of the total 57 Indian expeditions about a third were of an order that warrants inclusion here.

SIKKIM

Zemu Gap (5861m) stands out as a sharp V-shaped notch east of Kangchenjunga before it links up with Simvu. John Hunt and Bill Tilman are among those who have prospected here. While there have been several ascents, including a complete crossing of the Zemu Gap from the north, there remained uncertainty as to whether this cleft had been ascended from the south. Anindya Mukherjee and Thendup Sherpa successfully answered this challenge in December 2011, descending from the Guicha La to the Tongshoyang valley before tackling the icefalls below the Gap¹.

UTTARAKHAND

A Swiss team led by Roger Sch鋗li attempted the **Arwa Spire (6193m)** via the steep north face in May. All four members reached 5700m, but due to bad weather could proceed no further. Americans Conrad Anker, Jimmy Chin and Renan Ozturk climbed **Meru 'Shark's Fin' (6450m)** in the Gangotri glacier area. They spent 11 nights in bivouacs on the climb, reaching the summit on 2 October. On **Shivling (6543m)** in early October, an Anglo-Australian team led by Simon Yates reached 6000m on the traditional route but avalanches forced a retreat.

An 18-strong team from the Indo-Tibet Border Police, led by Vishal Anand, was successful on **Rajrambha (6539m)**, near the Panch Chuli group. After establishing a base and advance base camp they made two more camps. Following the east ridge, eight climbers reached the summit on 13 June and another 10 on the 14th.

Bhartekhunta (6578m): An IMF team proceeded from the Gangotri glacier at Gaumukh to make a base camp at Khada Pathar on left bank of the glacier. Two further camps took them to the foot of the east face of Kirti Stambh. Starting at midnight on 29 May, they climbed the east slopes of Bhartekhunta; in six hours team leader Kavita Burathoki, Soni Shah, Shanti Rai, Pooja Jangam and Ribanish Rympei reached the top with guides Chandra Bahadur and Pratham Singh Powar.

Nilkanth (6597m): A seven-member IMF team led by Ram Singh Salthia

1. Mukherjee A. 'Zemu Gap From The South', *AJ116*, 114-123 (2012)



Arwa Spire (6193m). A Swiss team led by Roger Schälli stalled at 5700m on the steep north face in May 2011. However success followed in 2012. (Harish Kapadia)

attempted the west face, from the Khirao ganga. They reached 5320m when heavy snowfall stopped progress.

Changuch (6322m): A seven-member IMF team led by Dhruv Joshi followed the same route as Martin Moran's first ascent team. From the Pindari glacier they made camp I at 5380m, Camp II at 5755m on the col with Chhota Changuch. Joshi, Andan Vaidhya, K. W. Lynddoh, Bharat Bhushan, Takpa Norboo, Chetan Pandey and Harish Kumar reached the summit on 11 June.

Nanda Bhannar (6236m): A three-member IMF team led by Anil Gurtoo made steady progress climbing from the Kafni glacier. Camp 2 was set up at 5800m in the upper Kafni icefall. Here one member developed high altitude sickness and had urgently to be carried down 200m. Further ascent was given up on 22 June due to the rescue.

Kharcha Kund (6632m): A six-member IMF team led by Ashish Kr Singh attempted this peak rather early in the season, in May. Their route up the north ridge proved steep and snow bound. A huge avalanche engulfed their camp leading to loss of equipment. Bad weather continued and the climb was given up on 19 May.

Gangotri III (6577m): Despite poor weather a three-member IMF team led by Debabrata Mukherjee made several attempts on this summit. An attempt on 16 June stalled at about 6370m; next day Mukherjee, Subid Ali and Himadri Nandi reached about 6560m on the summit ridge but stopped 15m short of the top, wary of a dangerous cornice.

Exploring the Girthi Ganga: A team led by Ashutosh Mishra made pioneering forays in the Girthi Ganga valley, Uttarakhand. The Girthi is a tributary of the Rishi Ganga (draining Nanda Devi glaciers) and joins

the Alaknanda river. A narrow gorge in the middle reaches of the Girthi presents formidable obstacles. Moreover it is near the border with China and it is difficult to obtain permission. The gorge was explored by Bill Murray and three others in 1950, and by a team from Mumbai led by Harish Kapadia in 1986. Several feeder streams descend from both sides, each leading to small valleys containing unknown peaks. Despite all the administrative and route difficulties Mishra's team made the head of the valley and visited the Unta Dhura pass leading to Milam. Next they gained the Jainti Dhura pass and Khingar La (both near the border), possibly the first civilians to reach there since restrictions were enforced.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

'Chemma Peak' (6105m): An elderly Japanese team made the first ascent of this peak at the head of the Karcha Nala, Lahaul, on the border with Spiti. Ascending via the north-east face, with two camps above base, leader Hoshi Kazuo with Tanabe Motoyoshi, Ishui Httoshi, Shinbora Yutaka, Kuze Katsumi and D. Gajendra (LO) reached the summit on 9 July.

Deo Tibba (6001m): Jerome Guggisberg and L. Rayssac from France ascended the east face of this peak at the head of the Jagatsukh Nala near Manali, reaching the summit on 29 April. Accompanying them were Konchok Thinless, Sakalzung Rigzin, Eagan Thakur and Virendra Singh. On 9 June five members of a team from the Travellers' Guild, West Bengal, led by Prosenjit Samanta, reached the summit after following the route over Norbu peak.

Peaks in the Kang La area: A seven-member British team led by Jonathan Moodie climbed several peaks in valleys east of the Kang La and north-east of Kangle in the Reru valley. The highest was **'Lama Jimba Kangri'** (6276m) climbed by the west face and a traverse to the east gully. The summit was reached on 6 September by Moodie with Kamal Masania, Dominique Southgate, Jonathan Bull, Virgil Scott, Robin Jones, Joe Prinold and Sgt. Anupam Mukherjee (LO). Also climbed were: **Peak 5405m** via the north-west face climbed on 10 September by four members, **'Mose Kangri'** (5930m) by three members on 11 September, and **Peak 5985 m** via the north face by two members on 15 September.

Peaks 6160m and 6181m, near Parang La, Spiti, were attempted by a Japanese team led by Kiyoshi Ishii. **Peak 6160 m** was climbed on 7 August via the south-west face by Yudai Satou with Jay Prakash Rai. **Peak 6181m** was climbed on 9 August via the east face by Ishii, Toshihiko Kawauma, Chikako Kimura, Akira Asakura and Yudai Satou with Indians Jay Prakash Rai, Angfuri Lama, Prakash Chanel and Yaduram Sharma (LO).

Devachan (6000m) Tos Nala, Kullu: A large team from Himalayas Beckon, Kolkata, made three camps, crossing the col with Papsura and then following the south ridge. The summit was reached on 3 August by leader Arupam Das, Dipankar Sen and Sudip Roy.

Unnamed Peak 6015m: This peak in Lahaul stands near KR-II (6187m) and KR-IV (6340m). Unable to climb either of these, a team from the

Mitrapara Youth Mountaineers & Culture Association turned to Peak 6015m; leader Samir Sengupta, Sandip Roy and Nirmalaya Ghosh reached the summit on 4 August.

CB 12 (6248m): This is the highest peak in the Chandra Bhaga group of the Lahaul Himalaya, a popular group due to easy access. A team from the Pimpri Chinchwad Mountaineering Association, Pune, established an advanced base and camp I. Starting from the last camp at 2am on 6 August, the summit was reached four hours later by leader Arjun Pethkar, five members and two Sherpas.

KR-V (6258m): One of several peaks in the Koa Rong Nala, Lahaul. A large team from 'Summiter', Kolkata, led by Aloke Kr Das, made a camp at 6225m west of the summit, which was reached in 40 minutes on 22 August by six members and two Sherpas. They found a cairn on the summit.

Dawa Kangri (6140m) and Lagbhorche (6000m): These seldom visited peaks stands on the Loser Nala, on the border between Lahaul and Spiti. Both summits were reached in August by a team from the Rifle Factory Sports Council, Kolkata, led by Ashim Ghosh.

LADAKH – ZANSKAR

Mari (6585m), in the Pangong range, was visited by a team of elderly Japanese climbers led by 77-year-old Masato Oki. Following the south face and south-east ridge, the summit was reached by K. Ouchi, Norio Katayanagi, Isamu Kezuka and Dawa Sherpa.

Peaks in Ladakh-Kishtwar: A large Swiss team led by Stephan Schaffer made the first visit to this beautiful area since its closure for several years due to political troubles. Climbing alpine style in smaller groups, they gained the following: **Red Apple peak** (6070m) on 17 August (Schaffer plus Fred Duraz, Gregory Triollet, Jiri Minar, Laurence Marie-Gabrielle Di Florio and Oliver Messerli); **Gocook peak** (6050m) was climbed on 21 August via the north-west ridge (Schaffer with Marc Roullier and Sebastian Colsonet); **Unnamed Peak 6050 m** via the south face and south-east ridge (Fred Duraz, Oliver Messerli, Passang Lama and cook Gokal Chontel).

Cerro Kishtwar (6155m) and White Sapphire (6040m): In late September a small, experienced team led by Swiss Stephan Siegrist made alpine style first ascents of these two peaks in the Kishtwar area. The south summit of Cerro Kishtwar was gained by its north-west face, followed by the south ridge to the main summit and the east ridge to the north summit (second ascent). They named the 1200m-route *Yoniverse*. Accompanying Siegrist was David Lama, Denis Burdet and Robert Frost. Siegrist and Burdet then climbed the shapely White Sapphire in a two-day push (4-5 October). The 850m route, *la viree des Contemporains*, follows the west face to the north top and on to the main (south) summit.

EAST KARAKORAM

Saser Kangri II (7518 m): Pride of place for 2011 must go to the first ascent

of this long-coveted peak by Americans Mark Richey, Steve Swenson and Freddie Wilkinson, a climb featured in the 2012 *AP*. Saser Kangri II was the second-highest unclimbed mountain in the world. The trio began their ascent from an advance base camp at 5800m on the South Shukpa Kunchang glacier on 21 August and summited on 24 August. Their five-day, continuous-push ascent and descent of the mountain's south-west face, without pre-established camps or fixed ropes, is one of the highest first ascents to be accomplished in alpine style.

Additionally, the team, which included Emilie Drinkwater, Kirstin Kramer, and Janet Bergman, made first ascents of four other 6000m peaks. **Tsok Kangri** (6585m) via the north face, WI4+, 680m, 31 July by Richey, Swenson, Wilkinson. **Saserling** (6100m) via the south face, 5.9+, 8 pitches, 350m, 6 August, by Bergman and Wilkinson. **Pumo Kangri** (6250m) via the west face, WI3, 450m, 5 August by Drinkwater and Kremer. **Stegasaurus** (6660m) via the south glacier to south ridge, steep snow climbing and ridge traverse, 9 August by Bergman, Drinkwater, Kremer, Richey, and Wilkinson.

Accompanying the Americans were Indian team members Chewang Motup (co-leader), Raj Kumar (liaison officer), Konchok Thinlese, Sirdar Pemba Sherpa (aka King Kong), Dan Singh Harkotia, Jangla Tashi Phunchok, and Tshering Sherpa.

Peak 6130m (Arganglas valley): In July a large expedition led by Skalzang Rigzin (India) and Guillaume Francois (France) visited this remote part of the Nubra valley. However, due to weather, logistics and illness they made little headway and their attempt on Peak 6130m was abandoned.

Peak 6017m (near Mamostong Kangri): Climbed in mid-August by an Indian-Spanish team led by Kusang Sherpa and Jonas Fernandez Cruces. The team had permission to attempt Mamostong Kangri (7516m), however after reaching the Mamostong Col (5807m) in two camps they deemed the weather not suitable to attempt the summit. In consolation they climbed nearby Peak 6017m through a central couloir of the west face and named it 'Junai Kangri'.

Saser Kangri IV (7416m): A 10-strong team from the Himalayan Club Kolkata Section, led by P. C. Sahoo switched to this peak in the Nubra valley, Ladakh, after bad weather stopped their progress on SK I. Base-camp was on the South Phukpoche glacier and two higher camps established before the change of plan. On 6 August, six climbers started moving up from C3, traversing the icefield that led steeply to the col, while a team of Sherpas who had already opened C4, moved up the upper face of SK IV and fixed two coils of rope. That same day Purba Sherpa reached the summit of SK IV, climbing solo. On 9 August Debraj Dutta and Ang Dorjay Sherpa, Meghlal Mahato and Mingma Thendu Sherpa summited in two parties.

Exploring the Lapti valley near Burma: In October-November 2011,

2. Wilkinson F. 'Spoils of War', *AJ116*, 63-73 (2012).

Dinesh, Nandini and Uttara Purandare, Atul Rawal and myself trekked to the easternmost part of India in the Lapti valley, Arunachal Pradesh. We had reached within 5km of the India-Burma border when heavy snowfall stopped us. The trail is located in the Anjaw District (on the Lohit river) and is near the Rima-Kahao border with China. This area, along with the plateau above Walong, is the 'Burma Hump'. During World War II several planes crashed on this plateau, unable to gain sufficient height and malfunctioning at altitude. Hawaii is the new District Headquarters. If the sea and local dances grace the better-known Hawaii in the Pacific, here at the Hawaii, mountain scenery matched the beauty of the sea and traditional people and their dances were no less attractive.

Ours was a beautiful exploratory trek, though strenuous on steep ground. We turned into the Lati river valley from Hawaii and forked to its tributary, the Lapti, at the village of Kamlat. The beauty of the forest in autumn colours made camping grounds at Tafam and Kushok almost a paradise. The trail led us to the foot of the Hoot pass which crosses into Burma and in a few days would have led us to Fort Hertz in Myanmar. F. Kingdon Ward's book *The Icy Mountains of Burma* covers this border area; a few of these peaks we observed on our way back. We came across two villages that so far seem untouched by what we call progress. We saw no evidence of previous trekkers though we heard rumours of one party here before. People of Burmese origin cross the Hoot pass (3570 m) into India to collect herbal plants every year. Overall, communities across the borders interact peacefully even today.

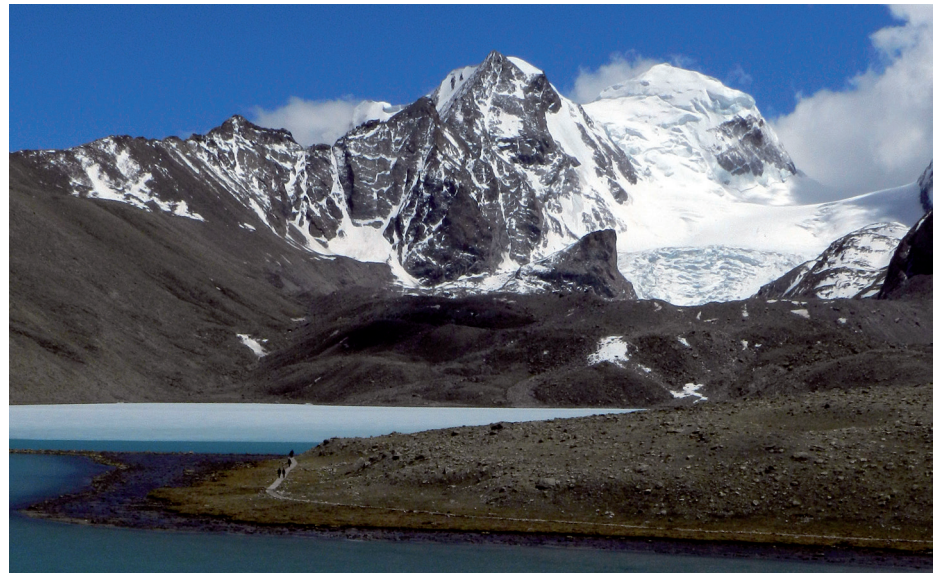
On the way back I fell almost 150 feet, slipping on loose wet gravel covered by shrubs/bushes. I just could not hold on to the bushes; falling head first and gathering speed, I slid over one slab after the other before coming to a halt on a small grassy patch. Though I was bleeding profusely from the nose and covered with scratches all over the body, except for one sharp blow on my right hip I was safe. Dinesh Purandare reached me in a flash with other porters, and I was back on my feet in half an hour. I climbed up the steep slope to reach the main trail and then with help of sturdy Mishmi porters walked down to the camp in a painful four-hour trek. Medicines reduced the pain and next day I walked down to the road-head from where a taxi took me to the Hawaii Rest House. A day of rest, two days of rough car travel, a night on a train and a five-hour flight and I was home.

India 2012

A total of 107 expeditions visited the Indian Himalaya in 2012. Of these 40 were foreign teams, 24 of which were either commercial trips or to routine peaks and not covered here. Of the 67 Indian teams 43 attempted routine peaks.

SIKKIM

Jongsong East peak (7462m) and Dome Kang (7264m): A strong team organised by the Kolkata section of the Himalayan Club and led by Pradeep



Gurudongmar Peak and its eponymous lake above The Plateau, north Sikkim.
(Harish Kapadia)

Chandra Sahoo made ascents of these two high peaks in the Janak Himal, north Sikkim. Jongsong East was climbed by a new route and Dome Kang received its first ascent from the Indian (eastern) side.

The east-south-east ridge, rising above the Jongsong La (6145m) on the Nepal-Sikkim border, was first attempted in 1983 by a Slovenian team. Others followed, but all from Nepal as permission to climb from the north and east is possible only for the Indian teams. The main summit of Jongsong forms the highest triple border point in the world (India-Nepal-Tibet). The team passed through Sikkim to the Upper Lhonak valley and then onto the Jongsong glacier that leads south-west to the Jongsong La. Basecamp was established on 17 September at 5525m, close to a large lake on the north side of the glacier. Access to the crest of the ESE ridge via the east flanks of Jongsong was barred by steep rocky walls and hanging glaciers. However, two Sherpas finally located a steep gully through these walls. Above was 200m of broken rock at 40-50°, followed by a difficult 200m rock tower, whose last part was very steep and loose, leading to an upper icefield. All these sections were fixed with ropes.

On the 26th a team of six climbers moved up from camp I carrying four days' food and fuel, and two tents. Over the ensuing days, climbers moved up the ridge and established three higher camps, the highest at 6874m. On the 29th five climbers reached the 7257m col between Dome Kang and Jongsong, and then split. Dawa and Mondal left the col at 10.15am, heading east, and in 35 minutes reached the top of Dome Kang. Meanwhile Ang Dorji, Phurba, and Sahoo set off for Jongsong to the north-west. They gained the knife-edge south-east ridge that leads toward Domo (Jongsong's south-east summit) but decided conditions were too dangerous at that time of day and returned to the col. Sahoo waited there



Kangchenjau above Chholamo lake from The Plateau. Harish Kapadia and two others obtained rare permission to visit this politically sensitive area in 2012. (Harish Kapadia)

while Sherpas Ang Dorgi and Phurbu descended to camp IV, collected a tent and several coils of rope and came back up. All three spent a chilly night on the col, then left at 5.30am on the 30th. In better snow conditions, it took three hours to ascend the ridge to Domo. The only previous ascent of this rounded top had been in 1930 by Günter Dyhrenfurth and Lewa Sherpa, who made the round-trip from Jongsong's main summit in one hour. The three decided not to continue across the plateau to the main summit (7462m) and made a quick descent of the mountain, reaching camp I just after dark. (This report by Pradeep Sahoo)

The Plateau, North Sikkim: 'The Plateau' is the northernmost area of Sikkim. Bordering China in the north and the Chumbi valley (China) to its east, it is a very sensitive area and well fortified. Many high peaks, like Pauhunri, Chommo Yummo and Kangchenjau, and passes surround this remote area. Prior to the 1960s it was visited by the likes of Trevor Braham, Dr Alexander Keillas, Bill Tilman and John Claude-White. However, since the Indo-China War in 1962 entry has been restricted. In 2012 Harish Kapadia and two others obtained special permission and were able to visit Gurudongmar lake, Chholamo lake, Donkhya La and Dorji La, photographing these and the peaks above. It was a rare privilege.

UTTARAKHAND

Semartoli Valley: An AC party led by Derek Buckle visited this area of the Garhwal in Sept/Oct and despite unsettled weather made first ascents of Peak 5301m (aka Kagbhusandi Parvat) and Peaks, 5210, 5120 and 5515m.³

Arwa Spire (6193m): On 28 September Roger Schali with Simon Gietl at last stood on the summit of this Garhwal classic. Their climb up the north

face had been challenging, route-finding extremely difficult, and the secure placing of nuts and cams often impossible. It was a struggle with cold fingers and toes, thirst and altitude; staying focused had been a demanding task. The entire route was climbed free and none of the rock pitches on the headwall was less than 6c.

Kamet (7756m): In September four members of the Chamonix-based Groupe Militaire de Haute Montagne made the first ascent of the south-west face of this Central Garhwal peak. They named the route *Spicy Game* and graded it ED1 VI/5+ 2000m.⁴

Thalay Sagar (6904m): Chinmoy Pal (Kolkata) led a 10-member team to this high pyramid in the Kedar Tal, Gangotri area. From the Gangotri temple they followed the route to Kedar Tal where basecamp was set up. Over the next 10 days they slowly built up supplies to a higher camp. Finally camp IV was set up at 6400m. On 29 June they climbed a steep rock wall and a chimney to reach the western ridge where the slopes eased. After 6hrs 30mins the summit was reached at about 2pm by Parijat Samanta, Santanu Basu and Sherpas Phurba Gyalgen, Pasang, and Dawa Wangchuk.

Exploration of the Jadhganga – Alaknanda watershed: This is a highly restricted valley not visited much by trekkers and climbers. John Auden surveyed the valley in 1939 during the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India. Heinrich Harrer and Peter Aufschnaiter escaped to Tibet over the Tsang Chok La (5240m) at the head of this valley to begin their 'Seven Years in Tibet'. R. D. Bhattacharjee trekked in the area in 1985 and in 1990, Harish Kapadia and Monesh Devjani climbed Trimukhi Parvat East (6280m) and following the Mana Bamak reached Saraswati Col (5900m), overlooking the Alaknanda valley. Two army teams attempted/climbed Trimukhi Parvat (6432m).

In 2012 Ashutosh Mishra obtained rare permission to trek in the valley. From the main road to Gangotri the team turned up the Jadh Ganga and later followed the Nilapani gad. Instead of turning south as the other teams had done, they proceeded east along the Ghora gad, establishing camps en route. The terrain was grassy with no major glaciers. Finally they reached the Basisi Col at the head of the valley and descended to the Alaknanda valley and arrived at Deo Tal, just few kilometres below the Mana Pass, an historic trade route. They walked down the motor road from here to Badrinath. This was major traverse of the Gangotri (Jadhganga) – Alaknanda watershed in the mode of the early explorers.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Shiva (6142m): Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden made the first ascent of The Prow of Shiva (north-east ridge) in the Pangi District over 5 - 13 October. It was one of the finest routes climbed in India during 2012.⁵ Whilst Fowler and Ramsden were on Shiva, their companions Steve Burns

4. See Jourdain D. 'Playing The Spice Game' in this journal, page 65.

5. See Fowler M. 'The Prow of Shiva' in this journal, page 47.

3. See Cocker M. 'The 2012 AC Semartoli Expedition' in this journal, page 57.

and Ian Cartwright made the first ascent of **Pt 5437** (Russian map), the highest peak on the east side of basecamp in the Tarundi valley.

Deo Tibba (6001m): The summit of this Kullu peak was reached on 14 July by all four members of the Japanese '2012 Roshan Masters Expedition': Hiroaki Kanada (64), leader, Kazuo Kouzu (65), Akio Kurita (63) and Youtchi Fujit (65).

Tharang I (6066m), Lahaul: A 12-member Anglo-Irish team led by Philip Thomas travelled to Udaipur and into the Miyar valley to Urgos and Khanjar. After two camps the summit was gained on 25 September, via the south ridge by Thomas, Steven Birch and Richard Mocklier.

Papsura (6451m): A 12-member team from Manipur state, led by L. Surjit Singh, attempted this peak as a precursor to a planned attempt on Everest next year. They followed the route via the Tos Nala to the Sara Umga La. They fixed ropes higher up and made an attempt on 14 September. However about 200m below the summit difficult terrain and poor snow conditions forced a retreat.

A large team from West Bengal, led by Subrata Chakraborty, made their second attempt on Papsura. They followed the route from the Tos Nala and climbed the NNW ridge, via the Sara Umga La, three members and four Sherpas reaching the summit on 28 July.

ZANSKAR AND LADAKH

Spangnak Ri (6380m) and Kiager Ri (6100m): These gentle places are situated on the western rim of Kiager Tso (lake), Ladakh, and are on the list of newly opened peaks. Basecamp (4856m) is a day's walk away from the road that skirts the lake. Spangnak Ri was previously climbed via its south-west face. A team led by Debabrata Mukherjee gained the col between the two peaks, from which he, Chinmoy Bhattacharjee, Nilanjan Chatterjee and Indranil Mukhopadhyay reached the domed summit of Spangnak Ri at 3.30pm on 26 June. Meanwhile Raka Mandal and Puspall Kundu followed the south-west ridge from the col to climb Kiager Ri.

Kundanma Ri (6140m), Ladakh: A West Bengal team climbed this recently opened peak. They approached from Sasoma village on the Manali-Leh highway, reached on 17 August. Next day they established basecamp at 5166m across the Kundanma river. On 21 August they started up the bouldery south-east face and turned to join the east ridge. The summit is a rocky knob on the highest point of the ridge.

Peak 6165m, Lenak Nala, Zaskar: A young Japanese Alpine Club team led by Ohori Taisuke climbed this peak via the north face on 2 September. They followed the route from Darcha, Ramjak, Gumboranj to enter the Lenak Nala. The peak is at the head of the Nala. All five members reached the summit (Taisuke, Mitsui Kensei, Kubota Shimpei, Takayama Tomoyuki and T. Yuichiro). They also attempted nearby Peak 6045m via its north face on 5 September.

Giabul Nala area, Zaskar: The Scottish Zaskar Expedition visited this lovely area in August and made first ascents of Shan Ri (c5750m), Scottish



Lugzi Pombo (6414m), Ang Tung, east Karakoram; climbed by an Indian team in August 2012. (*Rajesh Gadgil*)

Ri (c5850m [G23]) and Mama Ri (6150m). (*See Return to Zaskar p. 35*)

Nga Tsoey Kangri (L-13, 6080m), Zaskar: Four students from the Kyoto University turned to peak L-13 after deciding snow conditions were too dangerous on their original objective L-15 (6070m). These peaks are located on the west branch of the Lenak Nala. The team travelled to Padum, Dorzong (by road) and on to Sanka and the base camp. They climbed the south face of L-13 to its summit on 15 September and named the peak 'Nga Tsoey Kangri'. Summiters were Hiroaki Ogihara and Yusuke Morimbo.

Zaskar Explorations: Kimikazu Sakamoto from Japan continued his explorations of the southern Zaskar valleys. He has been instrumental in recording several unclimbed peaks in the area and it has led to many teams climbing in these valleys. On this, his third visit, Sakamoto prospected the Temasa, Gompe, and Haptal valleys. Temasa Nala is the next valley north of the Raru, and has been used by locals to reach Udaipur via the Kang La (5468m) and Miyar valley, and also to go to Kilar via the Poat La (5490m). Gompe Tokpo is the second valley north of the Temasa and runs south-west from Padam. Sakamoto's elderly team of four identified and photographed 21 unclimbed peaks.

EAST KARAKORAM

Rimo III (7233m) and Dungleung Kangri (6365m): From a basecamp on the North Terong glacier, an Indo-British expedition reached c6200m on the south-west face of Rimo III before being thwarted by snowfall. However the team made a first ascent of a nearby 6365m peak that they named Dungleung Kangri.⁶

6. See Yeasley, Bass and Antill 'Three Visions of Rimo III' in this Journal, page 21.



The Apsarasas peaks above the Siachen glacier. Peak I (7245m), in the centre, was first climbed by a Japanese team in 1980. Twenty-three Indian soldiers reached the summit in July 2012. (*Harish Kapadia*)

Petze Kangri (6130m) and Lugzl Pombo (6414m): In August, Aditi and Rajesh Gadgil, Vineeta Muni, Shamsher Singh, and Divyesh Muni visited the Ang Tung range, north-west of Pangong Lake. The Ang Tung is a small group of peaks west of the Koh Lungpa valley. This valley had never been visited by any mountaineers.

After a two-day trek up the Koh Lungpa from the village of Yurgo, basecamp was established at Vimgul (5210m) on 4 August. The first objective was a peak of 6130m; an advance base was set up at 5675m on its southern slopes. Leaving at 7am on the 9th, the team climbed the east face together with Sherpas Pemba Norbu and Nima Thondup; all except for Aditi reached the top at 11am. They named the peak Petze Kangri; *Petze* means 'baby yak' in the Ladakhi dialect.

Another camp was now set at 5850m on ice to the north-east of Lugzl Pombo. On the 17th a steep ice slope was climbed to the 6000m col between Lugzl Pombo and Petze Kangri, fixing 100m of rope. After ferrying more equipment from basecamp, on the 19th the team explored the north-east ridge, passing the first big gendarme on the left, and climbing the second (c6250m). On this section 250m of rope was fixed. On the 20th, the summit team left camp at 6am and fixed a further 300 m. A little before midday Gadgil, Muni and the two Sherpas reached the top after climbing through a cornice onto the final north-south summit ridge. They returned to camp at 3pm having recovered most of the fixed rope and gear. (*This report by Divyesh Muni*)

Rongdo (Rongdu) Valley: The Rongdo valley was first explored in 2005 by an Indo-American expedition led by Divyesh Muni and Don Goodman. They descended the valley in two days from the Satti area to the north. In 2012 an Indian-Canadian team entered the Rongdo valley on 5 August,

following the south side of the river. Basecamp was at 4802m and advanced base at 5181m just below Ngapo Kangri ('blue sheep' in Ladakhi) or Rongdo I (6350 m).

On the 18th, after several recce trips, eight members climbed the west sub-summit (6000m) of Balden Lhamo (named after a female goddess) or Rongdo III. They reached the col between Rongdo III and IV, then continued up the south-west ridge, returning to camp in a 10-hour round-trip.

On the 22nd, six climbers ascended **Chamba** (the future Buddha, 6170m) or Rongdo II via the south-east glacier (10 hours round-trip). On the 23rd, Nangang Bhote and Joie Seagram climbed the upper west rock ridge of **Ngapo Kangri** to about 60m below the corniced summit (12 hours round-trip). Meanwhile Andy Selters (USA) and Arvind Raman (LO) were ascending the same peak via its south-facing slopes, first on talus and rock ledges, then up the avalanche-prone south-east aspect to easier-angled slopes, from which they finally gained the summit (14 hours round-trip).

On the 27th, Raman, Danuru (Dawa) Sherpa, Kunzang Sherpa (sirdar), and Joie Seagram headed up the main glacier to attempt the true summit of **Balden Lhamo** (6120m). From a high camp at 5690m, they reached the col at 6060m above the icy headwall but retreated in the face of poor weather.

On the 29th, Selters and Nangang left a high camp at 5181m, several kilometres north-east of advanced base, to climb **Gazgazri** (Ladakhi for lammergeier, 6160m). They ascended the south-west ridge, then traversed onto the icy south face. Several short pitches, the last being 70° hard ice, led to the summit dome, and thence to the highest point. They returned to basecamp after a 14-hour day. (*This report by Joie Seagram.*)

Apsarasas I (7245m), Siachen glacier: The Apsarasas group is situated on the Teram Shehr glacier, a side valley of the Siachen, and consists of several 7000m peaks on the border with the Shaksgam valley to its north. The main peak was first climbed in 1976, before the Siachen war, by a Japanese team that reached the glacier via the Bilafond La. An Indian army team climbed the peak in 1980. The 2012 ascent was also a military affair, led by Col. Anil Goth, then commanding the newly established Mountain Training School of the Indian Army at the basecamp of the Siachen glacier. From the Siachen, Goth's team followed the Teram Shehr glacier to the east; logistic difficulties were solved by regular helicopter flights. Thirty soldiers fixed ropes up to the highest camp at 6900m. A first summit bid was made on 30 June but stalled on difficult terrain. The party spent the night at the high spot and next day eight soldiers reached the top; 15 more summited on 3 July.

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