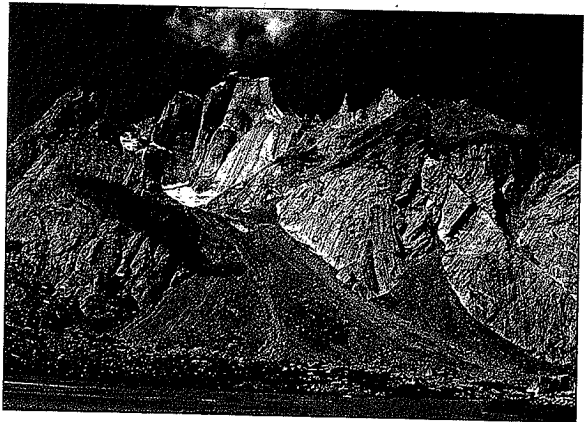


ALPINE JOURNAL



**The World's
Most Significant
Climbs**

of us come from Lecco and are members of the Gamma Group. In August we visited the Shafat Valley in Kashmir at N 34° 05' W 76° 12' [a side valley of the Suru northeast of Nun Kun leading to the Kun Glacier—Ed.]. Here we made the first ascent of "Peak Giorgio," a 5,135m rock aiguille, by the northwest face. This peak lies south of Ringdom Gompa, and we established an advanced base below the wall at nearly 4,300m. The route. Amico Gio, had a vertical height of 900m but 1,100m of climbing. On our final push Carrota, Corti, Mazzoleni, Panzeri, Ripamonte, Valsecchi,



The Shafat Valley, Kashmir. Seen from the west (A) is the splendid unclimbed peak that was the original objective of the Italian expedition. The west-facing slabs of smooth granite are over 1,000m high. (B) is Peak Giorgio (5,135m), which the Italians climbed via the northwest face in 27 pitches at VII A1. *Giovanni Pomi*

and I climbed to the summit in 36 hours, with one camp on the face, reaching the top on August 15. We left five bolts and 30 pegs in the route. The 27 pitches were relatively sustained, from UIAA V to VII, with the 22nd pitch being A1. Prospective second ascensionists will still need to carry blades and angles. The large peak immediately to the north, which was our original objective, has huge granite walls.

GIOVANNI POMI, *Groupo Gamma, Italy*

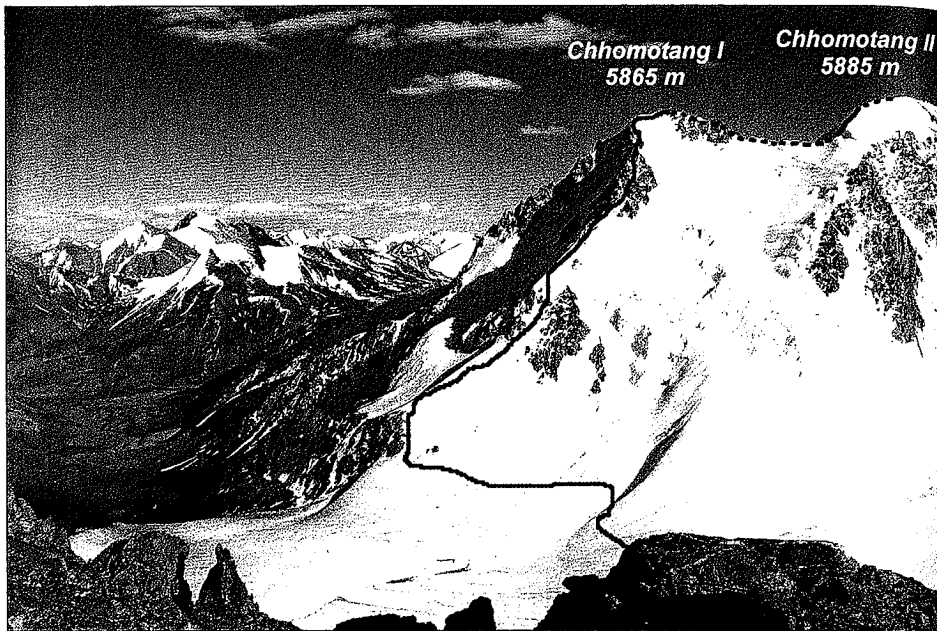
Chhomotang Valley: Chhomotang I, Chhomotang III and Thorchok II, first ascents; Thorchok I, second ascent; Chhomotang II (No Name Peak), ascent. In summer 2004 we explored climbing possibilities in the Chhomotang valley, 85km west of Leh in the Zanskar Range of Ladakh. For some years trekking agencies have used this valley, because it offers an easy 6,000m summit on the way from Lamayuru to Kangi. The peak is referred to as "No Name Peak," and its first ascent seems not to have been reported.

During the 2004 exploration we identified five principal peaks in the same range as "No Name Peak," and the idea of a 2005 Chhomotang Valley expedition was born.

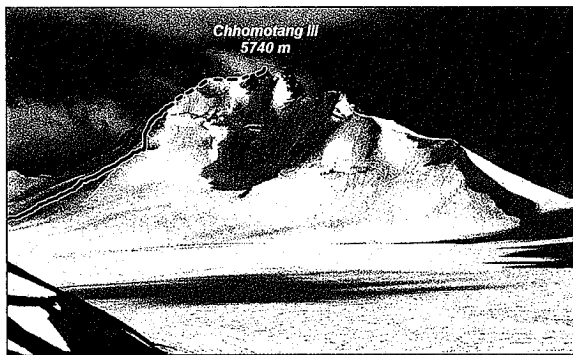
We approached using a 4X4 from Leh, via Lamayuru and the Fotu La (4,094m), until near Hiniskut, where a wide road leads into a gorge and gradually deteriorates into a foot-path leading towards Kangi. We used donkeys in this section, though even they were unable to reach the village, and we had to send for reinforcements from Kangi. From the village we walked southeast up the Chhomotang River to our base camp at 4,900m

After an initial attempt on July 20 by Jordi Bosch (Barraca), Carles Figueras, and I, Figueras and I climbed the elegant north spur of Chhomotang I (5,865m) on the 24th.

After crossing the glacier northward, we reached the bottom of the spur at 5,415m and spent eight hours climbing the 450m of compact snow, ice, and mixed pitches that form an almost continuous 45-60° slope. There was a horizontal section at 5,640m that we called the "Plaça de l'esmorzar" (*Breakfast Place*). We graded the route TD, due to its committing nature.



Chhomotang I (ca. 5,865m) and Chhomotang II (ca. 5,885m) in the Zaskar Range of Ladakh. Marked are the north spur of Chhomotang I (450m, TD, Bosch-Caros-Figueras) and the continuation along the east ridge of Chhomotang II. Although previously unreported, ascents of the latter have been made before via the northwest face (AD+). *Josep M. Sola i Caros*



Chhomotang III (5,740m) showing the route of the first ascent on the northeast face (Caros-Figueras-Garrijo, D 80°). *Josep M. Sola i Caros*

and difficulty of the mixed climbing. The summit, which had had no recorded ascent, comprised two enormous gneiss blocks.

We continued along the ridge westward to “No Name Peak” (5,885m). This 1km crest had all the qualities of an alpine classic and was more or less above 5,800m throughout. The first half consisted of blocks of compact gneiss, with several sections of F4+. We made three rappels. Beyond a col, the second half of the ridge had an

unexpected ice step (100m at 70°) and a long horizontal crest. This summit is climbed by trekking parties via the northwest face (AD+, our descent route). The altitude of 5,885m recorded by our altimeters contrasts with the 6,045m published in most trekking guides.

We decided to change “No Name Peak” to “Chhomotang II” after discussions with locals in Kangi. They have been referring to the valley and its principal peaks as “Chhomotang” for a long time. We encourage trekking agencies to consider this proposal and remember that, in general, alpinists should make an effort to ascertain local mountain names and not simply to

invent their own. Dialog with locals is the only way of respecting their inheritance.

On the 22nd Figueras, Inaki Garrijo, and I made the first ascent of Chhomotang III (5,740m), by the northeast face (D). There were significant crevasses on the glacier approach (50° maximum), and the final slope had a section of 80°.

On the 26th Bosch, Kim Bover and Figueras made the first ascent of Thorchok II (5,590m), by the northwest face. From the summit Bosch continued north along the ridge to make the second ascent of Thorchok I (5,740m). The route, which we graded PD, would make a nice acclimatization ascent. Thorchok I was first climbed on July 9, 2004, during the reconnaissance expedition, by Bosch and Figueras. In consultation with their local staff, they bestowed the name Thorchok (*Crown*) on the peaks because of their appearance. Thorchok I lies west of Chhomotang III, and Thorchok II is immediately south of its big brother. In 2004 Bosch and Figueras climbed the northeast face (800m, TD), which began with a 45° slope and continued with a 60m pitch of bad rock. Above, an ice face of 65-70° led to the summit, which was a 40m rock formation. They descended via the north face.

We recommend *Ladakh Zanskar* (1:350,000) from Nelles Verlag as a good general map of the region. However, Olizane (Switzerland) has produced a more detailed topographic map of the Kangi region, under the title *Ladakh-Zanskar - Centre* (1:150, 000).

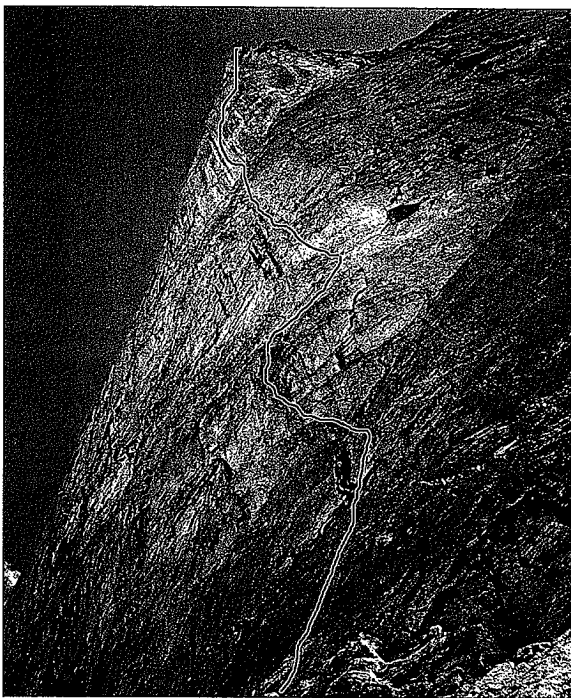
JOSEF M. SOLA I CAROS, *Switzerland*

HIMACHAL PRADESH

MIYAR VALLEY

Castle Peak, north-northwest wall, 7 d'espases. Last year Eloi Callado and I went to India to climb the Neverseen Tower. We put up a new route on the west face called Mai Blau (*AAJ 2005*, pp. 367-8). This year I went back for a couple of months, not only to climb, but also to travel around the country. I like India; I like the people, how they live and also their mountains. So wild, so hard. Such an incredible country.

Back again in the Miyar Valley during September and October, I was lucky to climb a new route, "7 d'espases" (480m, V+ A3+/A4), in a remote area. I wanted to try it alone. That was my goal, something personal. The



The north-northwest wall of Castle Peak, Miyar Valley, showing the line of 7 d'espases (480m, V+ A3+/A4, Vidal). The vague arête just to the right of this line is the 2002 Slovak route, Sharp Knife of Tolerance (VIII+ A3, Koller-Kopold-Linek-Stefansky). Silvia Vidal