

CORRESPONDENCE

J. de V. Graaff
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18 September 1983

Dear Mr Kapadia,

It is very kind of you to have sent me an account of your doings in the Lingti valley. What a wonderful choice you made — it must be one of the very few genuinely unexplored areas left. In September 1952 my wife and I, with 5 Sherpas (Pasang Dawa Lama was the Sirdar), camped at Langja in the Shilla nala and tried to (i) identify the original Shilla peak (23,050 ft), (ii) determine what J. O. M. Roberts had done in 1939, and (iii) see if there was a high path into the Upper Lingti. Very briefly, our findings were as under.

(i) There was no peak of 23,000 ft. Subsequent views from the south, when we climbed Mani Kang on the border of Rampur-Bushair, confirmed this and made us believe that the highest point of the Shilla/Lingti region lay some distance 'behind' (to the NE) of where 'Shilla' was indicated on the old sheet 52 L. We doubted if a Survey party had ever gone up as far as Langja, as its siting was inaccurate. We also doubted if the 'Shilla' climbed by the Survey party in 1860 had been approached from the west.

(ii) We identified Roberts's base camp and learned from his local 'guide' that there was considerable doubt if the 'bump' reached by Roberts in the mist was in fact the summit of Chau Chau Kang Nilda. (In H.J., Vol. XII, p. 129, Roberts himself is non-committal.)

(iii) There is a high path into the Lingti, but it is too low to interest mountaineers.

Our general impression was of a fascinating region, in which we would much have liked to spend longer. Instead we went south to Mani Kang and then over the Pin Parbati pass back to Kulu. Earlier in the trip we had been in the Dibibokri with Snelson, and on Deo Tibba with K. E. Beviill.

With kind regards,

JAN GRAAFF

P. F. Holmes
Shell Centre
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SE1 7NA
4 October 1983

Dear Mr Kapadia,

Thank you indeed for sending me a photograph and also your report on your expedition to Lingti in Spiti. Trevor Braham also sent me a copy of the letter you wrote to him.

I do envy you travelling to Spiti. Although it was a long time ago, we had two years in 1955 and 1956 map making, climbing and generally studying the area.

I found very interesting your comments on what has happened in the way of communications and development. The idea of regular bus services sounds very strange to me. Even more strange is the idea of a 9 km motorable road at Ratang valley leading to a major dam. I had not heard of the 1975 earthquake in Spiti, and it is sad that places like Ki Gompa may have been severely damaged.

Saddest of all was to hear of the fate of Shering Dawa of Rangrik. We found him a delightful boy; but I suppose you are right to say that it is difficult to go against tradition. I have had news from Ringzin from time to time so have followed his progress over the years.

It is extraordinary how everyone seems to climb Guan Nelda in not very good weather. Trevor Braham and I climbed in very poor visibility; of all the fifteen peaks I climbed over two years in Spiti, that was the only really bad day of visibility we had. However I have a very good photograph of Guan Nelda from high up on the southern side of the main Spiti valley should you ever need it.

Thank you once again for sending me your report.

With best wishes.

PETER HOLMES

A COMMENT ON THE NOTE ON
'LIVING WITH AN ANGRY MOUNTAIN'

I have read carefully, Sanjeev Saith's note (H.J. Vol. 39, p. 239) on my article 'Living with an Angry Mountain' (H.J. Vol. 38, p. 77) and would like to record my observations on it:

Paragraphs 2 and 3 of his note reveals an incorrect appreciation of the decision-making process of the alpine outing. In my group perhaps Nirmal and Pratiman were more experienced in Hima-