

*Uli Biaho Tower, South Buttress, 1989.* In late May of 1989, Nick Craddock, Paul Rogers, Murray Judge and I arrived at Base Camp at the confluence of the Trango and Baltoro Glaciers. We were to attempt the southeast face of the Uli Biaho Tower, using the same approach gully as Roskelley's party in 1978. A long period of unsettled weather made camp stocking difficult because of the dangerous nature of the approach gully. Finally, an attempt was made on the southeast face, but weather forced a retreat again. With only a week left before departing the area, a brief spell of fine weather enabled Craddock, Rogers and me to climb to the base of the south buttress, climbed by Italians in 1988. We made a bivouac there on June 23, 1989. Our ascent took three days, the last bivouac being at 19,500 feet. The climbing was 5.10, A3, and snow was falling half the time. The rock boots never came out of the pack. It took a day and a half to descend to Base Camp the day before the porters arrived to start the trek out.

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*Karakoram Ski Traverse.* The first Karakoram ski traverse was made by Galen Rowell and his team in 1980. Starting from Khapalu, they reached the Siachen Glacier via the Bilafond Pass. From there, they traversed the Baltoro, Biafo and Hispar Glaciers. The first part of this beautiful high-altitude route is unfortunately impossible, due to the Indo-Pakistani war on the Siachen. However, I thought it possible to improve the middle part of this route by avoiding the descent to Askole, which is too low for skiing. My first attempt in 1987 failed in bad weather. In 1990, it was our aim to reach the upper Baltoro from Snow Lake on the Biafo by crossing the following glaciers: Sim Gang, Nobande-Sobande, Chiring, Sarpo-Laggo, Karpogang and Mustagh. We reached Askole on March 31 and snowline at 3600 meters on April 2. After good weather and superb views getting to the upper Biafo, the weather deteriorated. We reached the Skam La on April 9, where we stayed storm-bound for three days. The Skam La is a difficult pass of 5700 meters with a 55°, 150-meter-high snow-and-ice wall on the west side: the east side is heavily crevassed. We skied down the Nobande-Sobande and reached the lower Chirung at 4200 meters on April 15. This glacier was difficult from 4800 to 5200 meters, with many crevasses. We got to the easy 5700-meter West Mustagh pass on April 18 and crossed it on skis, pulling our pulkas. After the wide landscapes of the Sarpo-Laggo and Karpogang Glaciers, we reached the East Mustagh Pass without difficulty. The south side of the pass proved difficult. We descended the 45° to 50° narrow gully between séracs on the left and a rock ridge on the right. After some crevasses, the Mustagh Glacier was easy. When we saw the Baltoro, we thought our problems were over until one member fell into a crevasse with skis and pulka. It took us 50 minutes to pull him out, luckily uninjured. We skied down the Baltoro to 4000 meters and walked out to Askole on April 25, to complete the first ski traverse of this high route between the Biafo and Baltoro Glaciers. Our members were leader Claude Pastre, Marc Breuil, Jean-Pierre Canceill, Antoine Melchior, Jean-Luc Rudkiewicz and I.

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