

the wall. The descent was made under very dangerous conditions. The wall is objectively very dangerous, with ice and stonefall, etc. Climbing to our high point was rated 5.10 A4 65/70°.

This was my second attempt. The first attempt was slightly more direct, but therefore more exposed to rockfall.

JON LAZKANO, SPAIN

**See accompanying photo of Amin Brakk in the opening pages of this journal.*

Makrong Chhish, East Ridge, Attempt. It was reported that Stephen Sustad and Simon Yates made two attempts on the east ridge of Makrong Chhish in August. The first, from August 26-29 via the northeast face, was thwarted at 5400 meters by unclimbable snow; the second, which approached the ridge via the southeast flank on September 1-6, reached 6400 meters before being stopped by dangerous snow conditions and bad weather. (*High Mountain Sports* 171)

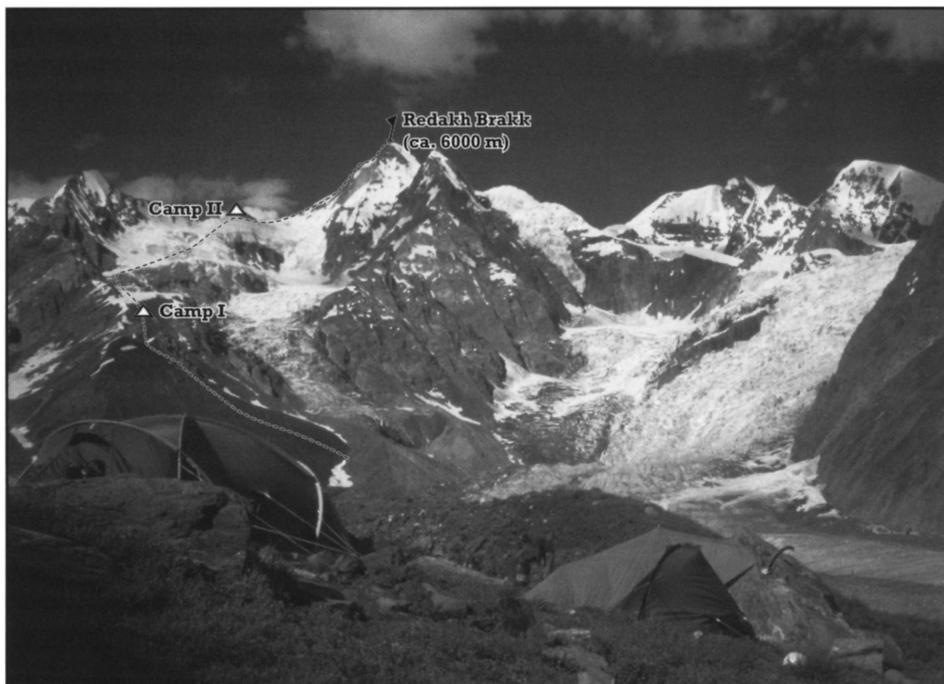
Chukutan Peak, First Ascent. It was reported that Spaniards J. Bañales, I. Peribañez, C. Reima, L. Tejada, M. Fernandez and J. Mugara had planned to attempt Spantik, but were forced to change objectives due to snow conditions. They climbed Chukutan Peak (6290 m) and another unnamed peak (6100 m). In both cases they reached the summit ridge but not the main summit due to complicated, and dangerous, ridge traverses up to them. (*Desnivel*)

Redakh Brakk, and Other Ascents. During the Haramosh II Expedition in 1995, we could not help noticing a prominent unknown mountain that dominated the view to the northeast looming up behind the ridge bounding the far end of the Sgari Byen Gang Glacier. Exact location was problematical. The Nushik La is the old pass linking the Kero Lungma and Hispar glaciers, and our mystery mountain appeared to be somewhere nearby. Subsequent study of maps and photos showed the peak to appear much closer to another pass, the Bolocho La. This location was confirmed on the ground during the 1996 trip.

The suspected location close to the Bolocho La meant that we had a choice of three approach glaciers: Kero Lungma, Bolocho, and East Makrong. We chose the Kero Lungma; it seemed to offer plenty of alternative objectives should our primary one prove too dangerous or inaccessible. In the event, our mountain was not readily accessible from the Kero Lungma, but we had a whole glacier-full of mountains to go at, and we had no record of any of them having been touched.

Dave Wilkinson and Colin Wells had all seen the mountain from the Haramosh trip, and fancied a go. Bill Church and Tony Park later joined the team.

Our mountain appeared to be under the magic 6000 meters limit, so Pakistani government permit, peak fee and liaison officer were not required. Our approach followed the south bank of the Kero Lungma Glacier. Base Camp was situated in a small ablation valley, easily reached from the glacier below, but well banked up with old snow. Above it rose a mountain of about 5000 meters (later named "Tsuntse Brakk"—"Small Peak," an unimaginative but descriptive name). We decided to try this peak as acclimatization and for a view. A short section 150 meters from the top gave a pitch of Scottish Grade 3, and proved quite awkward with only one ax and a ski-stick each. The view from the top was tremendous, but identification of our mystery mountain still proved uncertain.



Redakh Brakk, showing line of ascent. Dave Wilkinson

After a couple of days rest, we decided to walk up the glacier to try and find our mountain. Contrary to the map, the mountain appeared to be the other side of the Bolocho La, and so would not be directly accessible from the Kero Lungma. We had come up the wrong valley!

For further acclimatization and reconnaissance, we decided to bag another small peak above our camp. This was an easy walk up snow slopes with a very short top section on easy rotten rock. We estimated the height as 5200 meters. We called this peak “Goma,” after the plump grouse-like birds (*ram chikor*) that we found nesting in abundance on its lower slopes. The next day, with an earlier start, we took an exhausting walk up the snowy glacier to the Bolocho La. Our previous impression was confirmed: the Jersey Walla map was incorrect (we stand by this), and our glacier was the wrong one. The Bolocho Glacier was in fact longer than shown, and to get to the mountain from this side, we would have had to cross the pass and descend to the Bolocho glacier, before starting our climb. Having only limited time and resources, we rejected this option, and decided to look for an alternative objective.

Across the glacier from our Base Camp, three small glaciers descended from the “Balchish range,” the group of peaks forming the divide between the Kero Lungma and Hispar glaciers. We chose a pyramid-shaped peak on this ridge, marked as a peak on the map, but with no name or height given. We estimated its height as about 6000 meters—just legal. (We subsequently named our mountain “Redakh Brakk,” Balti for “Ibex Peak,” after the free-roaming beasts that populated the area.) The best approach seemed to ascend the lower ridge of the next peak to the west, then via the intervening glacier to a col overlooking the Hispar, and finally up the west ridge of our peak.

After a few days of unsettled weather, we packed four days worth of food and set off at mid-day to cross the glacier to a flat bottomed ablation valley shaped like an amphitheater. The next morning, a 4 a.m. start saw us gain the glacier on our right. By 9 a.m., we had reached our col; we also had a luxury camp site. We had only 500 meters of height to gain, and this was a west ridge, so would not get the first sun. An early start seemed unnecessary, so we set off just before dawn, traversing around some bumps on the level ridge to gain the proper foot of our ridge at a narrower subsidiary col. To our left, huge cornices projected out over the Hispar; we climbed by a series of couloirs, traverses and short steps well right of the crest. Conditions were superb. The middle part of the ridge steepened to a 50-meter section at 60 degrees plus. The ridge eased, and led in a series of broad corniced curves to a final cornice barrier. This was demolished with five minutes of old-fashioned chopping with the ax. A quick pull through the gap landed immediately on the summit.

After 10 minutes on the top, a single long abseil brought us back down the steep bit, and we were back in camp by 10 a.m. for a second breakfast.

Bill and Colin went for an old-fashioned col-crossing by returning via the Nushik La to Hispar and Gilgit. Their subsequent account of the descent of the steeper Hispar side, with 45-degree icy slopes traversing under seracs, made the old tales of crossing this pass with cattle hard to believe.

DAVE WILKINSON, *United Kingdom*

Nanga Parbat, North Face, New Route. Since Herman Buhl climbed Nanga Parbat (8125 m) for the first time in 1953, only one party (Czechoslovakia, 1971) has succeeded via the original route. Five other routes have been established elsewhere on the mountain, but none from the north. After a 1992 reconnaissance to the north and a subsequent study of aerial photos, I was convinced we could climb a new route via the ridge derived from the East Peak of Silver Crag. Our team consisted of 10 members who graduated from the same university (Chiba Institute of Technology), though only three members had adequate experience at high altitude. Of these three, two would not be able to participate for the whole expedition.

On June 5, 1995, after a three-day march from Tadoo with 100 porters and three tons of gear, we arrived at Temporary Base Camp (3900 m), normally regarded as base camp for other expeditions. Our Base Camp was established at 4500 meters on top of the so-called Great Moraine where other parties normally put up Camp I. We kept 20 porters to transfer loads up from TBC to Base Camp because of deep snow. Spending five days for logistics assignments was perfect for acclimatization. Camp I was established on June 11 at 5300 meters on the Rakiot Glacier. Up to this point we followed the original 1953 route.

The route from Camp I to Camp II is divided into two stages. The first stage was a steep snow and granite rock wall up to 5700 meters. After following an obvious 45-degree snow ridge, the climbing started with a rock crack (IV+) and followed a steep rock and icy snow band/gully. Six pitches above the crack, there appeared one pitch of 50 meters (IV+) where a 10-meter wire ladder was fixed for load transfer. To the left of our route, a big snow gully leads up to the skyline of the ridge where we wanted to climb. However, it is raked with rockfall after 10 a.m. As we climbed higher, we felt more and more rockfall flying down toward us, as our route was directed toward the upper parts of this snow gully. After gaining about 500 meters, which corresponds to two-thirds of the first part, we came up against a massive rock overhang. To the right, no feasible route was found. We were obliged to take a route to the left into the snow gully for 20 meters to come out above the overhang. Putting ourselves into this gully required everybody's courage. Before setting off one member confessed he would rather ask for forgiveness than be