

meter pitches to reach the traverse.

On the descent, there were a couple of tough moments (we left two 9mm ropes on pitch 29 because they got stuck), but at the end of the summit day we reached the camp at the broken portaledge. It was still snowing. The following day, the 13th of the climb, we rappelled down on the frozen fixed ropes. With the heavy pigs on the rope, it was more than an adventurous performance. During the descent, one of the Spanish climbers looked out of the portledge. It was Pep Masip. He was asking me something. I shouted "yes" to him, as I thought he was asking me if we had reached the top. Later on, I realized that he asked me if we were retreating as well. Anyway, we survived even this descent down the west face. Back on the ground, we named the route *Czech Express* (9 A3 70°).

FILIP ŠILHAN, *Czech Republic*

Amin Brakk, West Face, Sol Solet. Spaniards Sílvia Vidal, Miquel Puigdomènech and Pep Masip traveled to the Pakistan Karakoram, where, from July 8-August 8, they put up the route *Sol Solet* ("Sun, Little Sun") (VII 6c+ A5 60° ice, 1650m) on the west face of Amin Brakk (5850m). An account of their climb can be found earlier in this journal.

Changui Tower, East Face, Ludopatía. Fermín Izco, Mikel Zabalza and I left Pamplona on June 18 for Islamabad. Our objective was to climb in the Nangma Valley, which Fermín and Mikel got to know when they opened a new route on the Nameless Tower in 1995 (see AAJ 1996, p. 294).

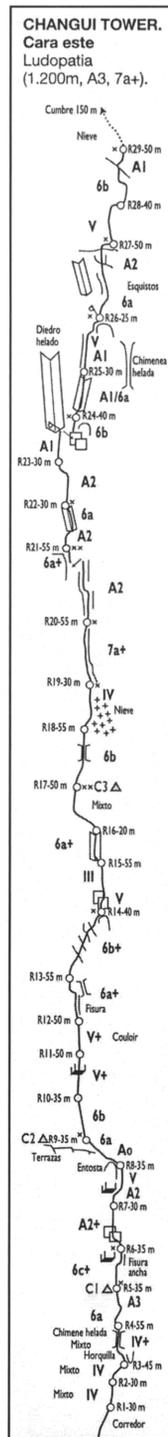
We left Islamabad quickly on our way to Skardu in a van followed by a jeep to Kande, a village from which we started our two-day walk to Base Camp (4300m). We did some acclimatization and looked at walls. We decided on the east face of Changui Tower (5800m), rejecting the south face of Amin Brakk because of avalanche danger. Furthermore, we tried to find a route that would be predominantly free climbing rather than aid.

Our ascent began with numerous one-and-a-half-hour carries to the foot of the wall from BC. The next day, we fixed the first three pitches and went back to the tents. We returned to the wall with the intention of not descending until we had stepped foot on the summit.

We used two ledges, 300 meters of static line, a 10.5mm 60-meter rope, another 9mm 60-meter rope and a 6mm auxiliary cord that we used to haul the bag. We climbed capsule style.

After six days on the wall, a sudden change in the weather forced us to descend using all of the ropes that we had. We just made it to the start of our route. Three days later, we returned to the wall and had "laughs" to see who would be the first to jumar the 6mm cord. Luckily, it held.

Back on the climb, we found granite of exceptional quality, good weather and a multitude of cracks and dihedrals with many sections at grade 6. Marvelous. There was little work for the aiders and much less for



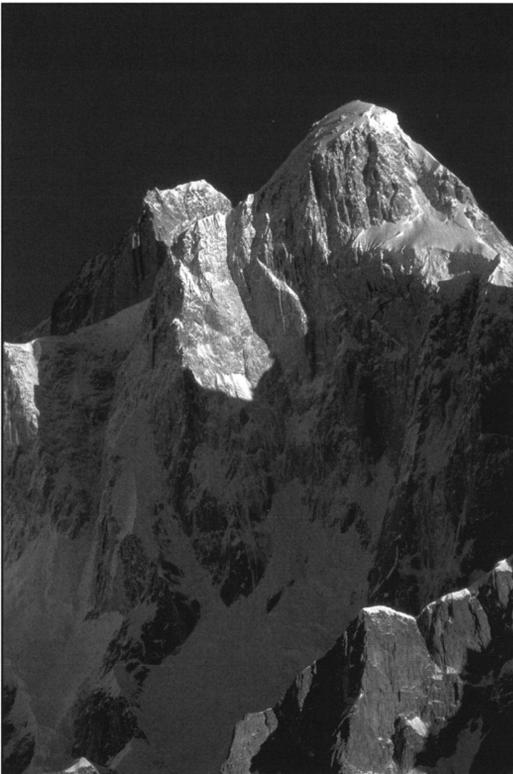
the drill (we only placed the occasional bolt at the occasional belay when we couldn't use Friends or nuts). We made the fourth camp on a big ledge at the foot of the final 350-meter vertical pillar, which ended up being the most technical part of the route. We finished the rock climbing and attacked the last 200 meters of snow, which gave access to the summit. This we reached on July 16. We rappelled the final pillar of the route and descended via a corridor that gave access to the valley, dragging all of our gear and trash, which saved us from rappelling the entire wall. We called our route *Ludopatía* ("Compulsive Gambling") (A3 7a+, 1200m).

After two days of rest back in BC, we proposed to try an ice wall of more than 1500 meters, but the persistent bad weather in all of the Karakoram at the end of July made us desist and return home.

RUBÉN ARAMENDÍA PÉREZ, *Spain*

HISPAR MUZTAGH

Pumari Chhish, South Face, Attempt. The south face of Pumari Chhish (7492m) rises 3000 meters from the Jutmal Glacier. This complex face is threatened on most aspects by high hanging seracs, and the line Julie-Ann Clyma and I took followed an obvious spur on the left side.



From ABC (ca. 4570m), a day was spent reaching the lower part of the spur (ca. 5400m). This involved an approach on easy but threatened snow slopes and then technical rock climbing (HVS) followed by 55-degree ice slopes. After a day stopped by snowfall, a traverse across the lower part of the face and an ascent of a hanging face (60° ice) led to an open bivouac at ca. 5900 meters. A further day in very bad weather led to a precarious camp at ca. 6200 meters. This was the maximum height reached before a descent was made back down the route.

The weather conditions were extremely unstable throughout the expedition. Snow fell on all but five days. Retreat from the highpoint was necessitated by the weather and extreme avalanche conditions. Thirty-six hours were spent with avalanches passing around and over the tent. There were no accidents to expedition members or support staff.

We were very fortunate to obtain a permit within one month of applying

The south face of Pumari Chhish. ROGER PAYNE