

whole traverse. The ascent began from Nura Glacier via a snow and ice slope on August 4. The snowfall was very intense in August, so the slope was avalanche-prone. Its steepness varied from 30 to 45 degrees in the upper part. The team used ropes and crampons, gradually making its way up. It took two days to climb to the saddle (ca. 6000m) on the main ridge of the Zaalaisky Range (this saddle lies to the east of Zarya Vostoka). The altitude difference from Nura Glacier to the ridge was 1400 meters. In the clear morning, the summit looked no more than two kilometers away and 350 meters higher. The weather changed suddenly. In the two days that followed, the climbers were able to move only 150 meters higher along the ridge because of thick fog; visibility was less than two meters. The third day began the same way, but, since the team was running out of food, it was necessary to reach the summit. Luckily windows appeared in the clouds, which let the team see its way to the top. It was a great joy to make the first ascent of a fascinating peak. There should have been a wonderful panorama of the Pamir with its summits, endless glaciers, and Lake Karakul, but the clouds didn't permit a view.

It took one and a half days to get down to East Kyzilsy Glacier, completing the full traverse of Zarya Vostoka Peak. The steepness of the snow-and-ice descent route ranged from 30 to 40 degrees; some bits of rock were also encountered. The ca. six-kilometer traverse was completed on August 9. Later in the course of the expedition the team of climbers crossed several saddles and made another first ascent, this one of Chorku Peak (Tadjik: Four Sides, 6283m), which is found west of Korumdy along the main ridge of the Zaalaisky Range.

ALEXANDER NOVIK *and* NATALYA ZOTOVA, *Russia*

UGAMSKIY RANGE

Kyzylbash Peak, Northeast face, New Route. On August 19-22, a team from Norilsk composed of Anatoly Paveliev (leader), together with Pavelieva Nelia, Sergey Kartsev, Nikolay Koltakov, Rimma Popova, and Natalia Raficova, established a new route on northeast face of Kyzylbash Peak (4200m), which lies in the Sayram-Su Valley in the Ugamskiy Range. The route took the left side of the 750-meter rock face, which has an average steepness of ca. 82 degrees in the central part. Two days were spent fixing the route prior to beginning. Summit day and return to base camp was made on August 22.

VLADIMIR SHATAEV *and* VLADIMIR KOPYLOV, *Russian Mountaineering Federation*

TERSKEY ALATAU

Kuilu Range, Exploration and Various Ascents. The Terskey Alatau Range extends along the southern shore of Lake Issyk Kul. During Soviet times it was one of the most popular climbing venues in the Tien Shan, having three mountaineering camps based in high valleys on its northern side.

Tucked away to the south of the Terskey Range and west of the Inilchek Valley/Central Tien Shan is the compact and distinct range known as Kuilu. Its highest peak, Constitution Peak (5281m), dominates the eastern part of the range and has several demanding routes on it as a result of a Soviet competition event. Several other peaks accessible from the same base camp were also climbed in the Soviet era. There were no records of any climbing in the west-

ern part of Kuilu prior to our expedition.

In early September, a team consisting of Pat Littlejohn, Victor Saunders, and Vladimir Komissarov (guides) with David Bowden, Ingrid Crossland, Morrie Erickson, Tony Gold, Diarmid Hearn, Ursula Mulcahy, James Stephenson, Jane Whitmore, and Andrew Wilkinson, approached Western Kuilu from the north by six-wheel-drive vehicle along the Kuilu River Valley. After an exciting river crossing that left the vehicle damaged and immobilized for two weeks, Base Camp was established at Karator (Black Rock) on a grassy site at ca. 3300 meters. In poor weather, two Advance Base Camps were then established, one at the snout of the Karator Glacier at 3700 meters and one on a lateral moraine at 4000 meters. The bad weather dumped 30 centimeters of snow and made conditions difficult for a while, then the weather cleared and was perfect for ten days. Teams led by Komissarov and Littlejohn made ascents of seven moderate summits running along each side of the valley (heights ranged from ca. 4200 to 4860m) culminating in the pointed spire of Tsarevitch (4920m), while Saunders' team climbed the interesting Humani Peak (AD-, 4800m) and discovered a route to Karator Peak (5203m), the highest of the group. Eight climbers then reached the summit of Karator Peak via a fine snow climb of PD standard.

Littlejohn, Crossland, and Hearn then made an attempt on the impressive Peak 5088m, gaining its north ridge via a 400-meter wall of 50-degree ice. Conditions on the ridge were too poor to continue, forcing a long and tricky descent of the face. Saunders then led a reconnaissance to the south side of the peak and discovered an easy couloir line leading to the more straightforward south ridge, which eventually provided the route of ascent for Littlejohn's team. In honor of the team's female member, the peak was named Matarshinita (which translates as "woman who uses bad language," the nickname given to her by camp staff).

With the major Karator peaks having been climbed, attention was turned to the glacier systems immediately to the west in the Ashutor Valley. Three peaks, including Krenintor (4732m), were climbed and many other more technical possibilities noted.

The area has much to offer for climbers seeking exploratory mountaineering in a range not much higher than the Alps but with a remote and pristine ambience. The Ashutor glaciers are surrounded by easily accessed and appealing objectives, and the region of peaks and glaciers south of Karator Peak is apparently untouched and could be approached from the south.

PAT LITTLEJOHN, *United Kingdom*

Ala Archa National Park

Svobodnaya Korea (Free Korea Peak), North Face, New Route. From February 21-26, a Krasnoyarsk team led by Valery Balezin, and comprising Vladimir Alexandrov, Andrew Zakrepa, Yuri Stepanov, Alexander Terentiev, and Sergey Cherezov, established a new route on the north face of Svobodnaya Korea (Free Korea Peak, 4777m). (The route is indicated as route 15 on page 309 of the 2000 *AAJ*.) The route, which was given a Russian grade of 5B for winter, comes in on the left side of the north face in a line that runs between the 1982 A. Shvab route (5B) and the 1966 B. Studenin route (6A). Neither the Shvab nor the Studenin routes have seen a second ascent.

Between these two routes is an icy couloir that was considered in 1995. As with all the most technical routes on Free Korea, it is composed of three parts: first, an ice slope up to about 50 degrees, then a rock face (about 80°) and finally a steep mixed section that leads to a knife-edge ridge, which is then followed to the summit.