

hard task of pulling up the bags. Once we had set up the portaledge, we began the next wall, where we encountered two pretty difficult pitches, with the odd expanding flake, until we reached Taniguchi's bags. From then on, the climb became easier, with good crack pitches stretching up to a roof some 300 meters above Camp 1. Here we set up Camp II and continued through a lovely offwidth and a logical system of corners up to the top ledge, from which the Americans had continued in their attempt to reach the summit. On the top ledge, we set up Camp III, some 900 meters from the ground. Here the final wall started with an initial pitch of difficult nailing, which led to an obvious exit corner. This zone, which was fairly overhanging, had various expanding, totally loose features, which fortunately could be got around without being touched.

After arriving at the summit edge, which joins the *Ship of Fools* route to the summit, we were held up by a five-day storm in Camp III. Time and food ran out, and with the improvement of the weather we collected the fixed ropes and began our descent without having completed the route, which we have named *Akelarre* (6b A4, 1150m).

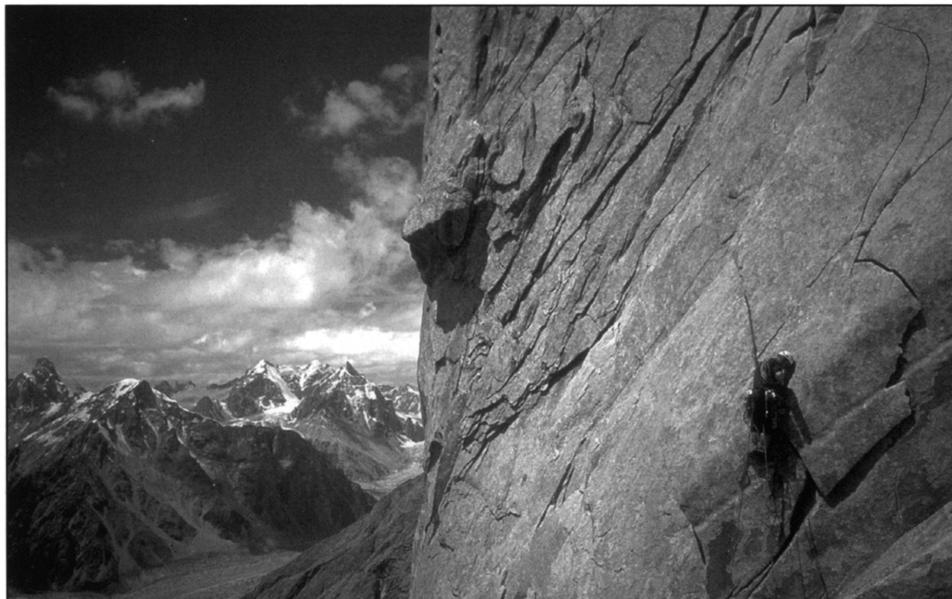
ALVARO ORTIZ, *Spain*

Cat's Ears Spire, Hainabrakk East Tower, and Shipton Spire, Ascents. In July and August, Mike Pennings and Jonathan Copp took advantage of brief weather windows and a light-weight approach to climb three routes, two of which were new and one of which was the first ascent of a peak. From July 15-17, the pair made the first ascent of Cat's Ears Spire (ca. 18,800') via the route *Freebird* (VI 5.11d A1, 3,500'); from July 26-28 they established the new route *Tague it to the Top* (VI 5.11 C2, 3,700') on the east face of Hainabrakk East Tower (ca. 19,024') for the second ascent of the peak; and on Shipton Spire (a.k.a. Hainabrakk Central Tower, 19,700'), they made the second ascent of the route *Inshallah* (VII 5.12 A1, 4,300') from August 4-6. A full account of their expedition appears earlier in this journal.

Hainabrakk East Tower, First Ascent. The married couples of Steve Schneider and Heather Baer, and Brian McCray and Roxanna Brock made the first ascent of Hainabrakk East Tower (ca. 19,024') from June 25-July 27 via the route *For Better or for Worse* (VII 5.12a WI3, 3,500'). The story of their climb appears earlier in this journal.

Great Trango Tower and Trango Nameless Tower, Attempts. During July and August, Miles Smart and I spent almost 50 days camped atop a lateral moraine on the Trango Glacier. We departed the U.S. on June 24 and arrived in Pakistan two days later. After a week of rummaging through the seething markets and racing streets of Rawalpindi and listening to the bureaucratic loop tape of Islamabad, we headed north to Skardu. Two jeeps carried us to the first of two natural roadblocks on the way to Askoli, forcing us to porter our loads past a river-ravaged section of the road and across a raging creek. (The jeep travel was perhaps the most dangerous part of our trip.) We chose our porters while a police official wildly swung a stick to drive the extremely eager porters away. Three days later, we were at base camp. We camped at the toe of our intended line of ascent: the southwest ridge of Great Trango Tower. The weather was unusually unstable this season and provided three distinct weather windows, one of five days and two of three days.

We established a high camp at the col between Great Trango Tower and Trango Nameless Tower. We climbed the snow and ice (up to 80°) that leads to the west summit of Great Trango



Miles Smart on the last headwall on the Great Trango Tower during the second attempt.
TIMMY O'NEILL

Tower in a 14-hour push as part of our acclimatization plan.

The southwest ridge was originally attempted in 1990 by a Spanish team of five that relied on fixed ropes and established high camps (high on the route we found disappointing amounts of trash and fixed ropes). We decided to begin our attempt several systems to the east of the original line to avoid the initial aid pitches. Our first attempt ended with a forced bivy at 18,000 feet after we had climbed for 12 hours through 4,000 feet of 4th class to 5.10. The climbing was over very mixed terrain with mostly solid rock. We descended for 12 hours the following morning, soaked, muddy, and eager for a cup of hot chai.

On our next and final attempt we decided to alter our style of ascent. Considering the likelihood of weather forcing us down, we opted to bring extra food and an I-tent that required the fatal employment of a haul bag. Hauling cost us the time and energy that were requisite for success in this season's weather patterns. We spent five days reaching our high point, which was about 300 meters below the west summit. As Miles was leading the splitter cracks at the top of the final headwall, the snow began to blow. It would not cease precipitating for more than 15 minutes in the next 48 hours.

The following morning we awoke to fresh and falling Himalayan powder. We began a series of over 40 rappels and reached base camp, completely exhausted and frayed, 17-plus hours later. I personally vowed to never again compromise my original objectives, which explicitly prohibited the suffering inflicted by the service of a "pig."

We then attempted a one-day, single-push climb of Trango Nameless Tower via *Eternal Flame*. We began from the col at 5:30 a.m.; after 12 hours of climbing, we were within six pitches of the summit. After discussing the complications that can arise from cold, altitude, and an ill-equipped forced bivy, we decided to descend to base camp.



Miles Smart descending Great Trango Tower after the team's second attempt in the worst storm of the season. The descent took 17-plus hours and over 40 raps. TIMMY O'NEILL

Three days later we blasted from the col for another try on *Eternal Flame*. We began at 3 a.m. to give us a jump-start on the six pitches with which we were not familiar. Two pitches below our high point, three pitches into my second "leader's block," the hand of Allah came to catch me and then subsequently thwack me into the wall. I fell over 100 feet after short fixing the rope and blowing out a fixed nut from our previous ascent. The prophetic name given by the first ascent party to the pitch that I whipped from was "I believe it's meant to be." We had been climbing for eight hours when the accident occurred.

Miles lowered me from 19,000 feet to the Shoulder Camp, where we were met by Mario Oñate and Armando Datolli from Mexico City, Mexico. They were in the process of declaring "chisponbanda" ("Let's get out of here") and were on the Shoulder collecting their gear. They assisted us down the remaining ten pitches of fixed ropes and in the process taught me some more Spanish: "cerca la bala" ("close to the bullet").

TIMMY O'NEILL*

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Little Trango Tower, First Ascent, and Hainabrakk East Tower, Unfinished Symphony. Operating out of Shipton base camp in July, Joshua Wharton and Brian McMahon established new routes on two area towers. *The PM Wall* (V- 5.10+), named for Wharton's late mother, ascends the southeast face of Little Trango Tower. This previously unclimbed tower is approached via the long gully that starts at Trango base camp. From the top of the gully, one traverses south along the base of Little Trango, surmounting several short fifth-class sections. The route proper starts