

the conditions were different. The nice snow slope had become a horrible mirror of black ice. Early the morning, we waited for the stars but the snow was falling again. At 7 a.m. we decided to try something. We climbed slowly on the dark ice, and made many pitches.

Then we waited for the rain to stop. Eight days sleeping in the wet tents, eating peanut butter, playing cards, and listening to music. And like an incredible dream, the sun came back exactly the morning when the porters came back.

There are so many things to do in the Hindu Raj. Two valleys more to the east, 14 unclimbed summits; on the back side of Makutchum, Chikari, or maybe near the Koyo Zom... I will be back!

HERVÉ QUALIZZA, *France*

KARAKORAM

Passu Sar, attempt. Believing it to be still unclimbed and therefore one of the highest unclimbed summits in the Karakoram, a five-man Australian team led by myself booked Passu Sar (7478m). This peak is situated between Shispare and the Batura Group. However, shortly before leaving home, we learnt of a German expedition (reported in the 1995 *AAJ*), who appeared to have climbed Passu Sar in August 1994 and not the lower Passu Diar (a.k.a. Passu Peak, 7295m), which lies a little to the east. Checking with a local high altitude porter in Gulmit, we were able to confirm that Dirk Naumann, Ralf Lehmann, Volker Wurnig, and Max Wallner had indeed made the first ascent of the higher peak, using skis for much of the ascent and bypassing the lower peak by going through a high shallow saddle to one side.

We set up base camp in June close to the Passu Glacier but instead of finding the lower glacier just badly crevassed, as we had expected from information provided by the Alpine Club of Pakistan (which organized a successful expedition to Passu Diar in 1996), we discovered a giant icefall starting at around 4200m and having over 800 meters of vertical gain. On closer inspection we realised that the route was very complex, dangerous, and just not possible for a lightweight effort, so we abandoned any further attempt. The previous winter had been very dry and knowing this, we had arrived early to profit from whatever snow cover remained. However, it appears that a succession of dry years has taken a severe toll.

DAMIEN GILDEA, *AAC, Australia*

Sub-6000m peaks (Karakoram and Hindu Raj), attempts and ascents of new routes. On June 5 the Korean Five Peaks Expedition set off from Seoul for the Karakoram and Hindu Kush. The seven-man expedition, led by Gi-seok Seo, set out to make ascents of five peaks less than 6000m. These peaks were Khache Brangsa (5560m) and Ghonoboro (5500m) above the Arandu Valley, Mustum (5620m) and Shikari (5928m) in the Yasin Valley, and Bubulimotin (6000m) in the Hunza Valley.

First ascents were made on the North (5350m) and South (5560) peaks of Khache Brangsa in semi-alpine style. On June 15 base camp was established at 3800m and on the 18th ABC at 4300m. Chang-ho Kim, Seung-mook Im, Gi-heon Jang, and Seong-moon Choi reached the summit of the North Peak on the 28th. The team bivouacked for the night at the 5240m col between the North and South Peaks, and the following day Chang-ho Kim and Seong-moon Choi reached the summit of the South or Main Peak. They spent three consecu-

tive days climbing this new route, which was named Gosanja and rated 5.9 and WI5 M4.

From the Khache Brangse base camp, Gi-seok Seo, Chang-ho Kim, and Seong-mook Im climbed on the northwest face of Ghonboro in semi-alpine style. The climb took them three days. On the first night they bivouacked at 4900m and on the second at 5380m. The following morning the weather deteriorated into heavy snowfall and subsequently rock fall increased down their line. They were only able to reach 5380m, just 120 meters shy of the summit. The 1350-meter route was named Great Balor and rated WI4 M6.

A few weeks later team members, Gi-seok Seo, Seong-mook Im, and Myeong-hee Lee nearly climbed Mustum Peak in the Darkot region of the Hindu Raj. They climbed in alpine style. From an ABC they first bivouacked at 5100m, then climbed up into a couloir, where they bivouacked again at 5350m. They were finally stopped just 50 meters short of the summit on the evening of the third day, retreating due to an increasing night chill factor and lack of provisions and equipment. Once again, the team exercised care on the potentially dangerous descent. They rated the climb 5.9 M5 WI4.

On July 29, Chang-ho Kim and Seong-moon Choi climbed Shikari in alpine style via the northeast couloir. They spent three nights and four days completing the first ascent of the northwest route, Goxienzi, a 2000-meter wall rated M4 WI4. From ABC, the trio climbed 1,500 meters on their first day and on the second made the summit and retreated to a snow hole about two-thirds of the way down to their previous night's bivouac. On the third day they descended to their first bivouac site, where they rested. They then continued further west along the ridge and down a less steep slope to regain their base camp. Later, the Korean Five Peaks Expedition was forced to retreat from Bubulimotin due to unfavorable weather conditions, falling rocks and injuries to three of their climbers. The team returned to Seoul on August 28th.

PETER JENSEN-CHOI, *Korea*

Editor's note: Khache Brangsa was almost certainly a first ascent and it is most likely that the summits of Ghonoboro and Mustum have never been visited. 5928m Shikari or Chikari was first climbed in September 1999 by Slovenians, Jernej Bevjek, Jernej Brescak, and Matej Kovacic via the north ridge, finishing up the northwest face. However, prior to their ascent the three had climbed the 1,400-meter central couloir on the east face as far as the north ridge.

Ogre, second ascent and Ogre III, first ascent. On July 21 the team of Urs Stöcker, Iwan Wolf, and me stood on the summit of the Ogre (7285m). Having succeeded on the first ascent of the extremely difficult Ogre III (ca 6800m) on July 1, we concentrated on climbing the Ogre. Since the first ascent in 1977 by the two British climbers Chris Bonington and Doug Scott, all other attempts at climbing the mountain—more than 20 expeditions—had been unsuccessful.

On July 18, after two days' preparation, the team left base camp in uncertain weather for their summit attempt. On July 20 we reached the top of the south pillar at 6500m, after having climbed 28 pitches. The following morning at 2 a.m. they began the final, decisive stage. Climbing the steep (up to 55 degrees) icefield was very strenuous. It led to the start of extremely hard climbing up the final buttress to the summit. This proved to be UIAA VI and A2 at over 7000m. Strong wind and extreme cold made the last meters to the summit challenging. At 3:30 p.m. we were on top. After 24 years....

THOMAS HUBER, *Germany*