

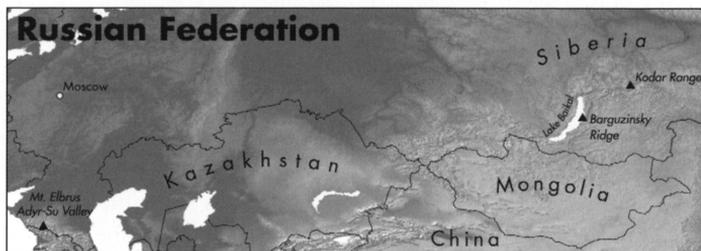
Russia

CENTRAL CAUCASUS

*Ullu-Tau (4,207m),
north face, new route.*

In June 2003 a team of Czech climbers Bohuslav Vlcek, Jan Skalik, and Ondra Vespalec climbed a new route on the 1,400-meter high north face of Ullu-Tau (4,207m). Ullu-Tau is at the end of Adyr-Su Valley in Central Kavkaz. The new route is on the right of the north face through a snow couloir and snow-ice threshold. They began climbing at 3 a.m. and were on top 14 hours later. They descended after a bivy the next day.

JAN KREISINGER, *Czech Republic*



SIBERIA

Czarsky Tron, southwest wall, new route. In February 2003 a team from Krasnoyarsk climbed a new route on the southwest face of Czarsky Tron (Czar's Throne, 2,500m) located in the Kodar Range, Eastern Siberia. The temperature on the arrival at base camp was -20°C . The extreme cold of last year (up to -50°C) came into mind. The team was flown by helicopter, which allowed them to save energy for the approach. They settled in an abandoned hut and dug a snow cave for nights near the base of the wall. It took 10 days to put in Camp I (after fixing six pitches) and Camp II (after fixing 11 pitches). The climbing was mostly hard aid. They proceeded up the 75° wall placing hooks, anchors, friends, and bolts. Free climbing seemed hardly possible because of poor rock. After establishing Camp II the team gathered in a portledge for the summit push. It was getting warmer and the rising temperatures brought strong winds. They worked their way to the summit ridge with frozen fingers, the storm failing to calm down. After advancing 20 more meters, they finally reached the summit. The descent took a whole day and they arrived in base camp in darkness. This is possibly the hardest route on Czarsky Tron (1,000m, 6B). Members: Valery Balezin (leader), Alexander Kuharev, Alexey Sikilinda, Vladimir Arhipov, Egeny Dmitrienko, Anton Pugovkin, Sergey Cherezov, Uriy Glazyrin, Dmitry Tsyganov.

Y. GLAZIRIN, *www.Mountain.RU*

Agrada, east face, Mirror for the Hero. In August our team established a new route on the 2,340m Agrada, Barguzinsky Ridge, Ulzykha River Canyon. Mirror for the Hero (566m, 6B) ascends the center of the east face. The route opened in a corner with a wide complicated crack. Above the crack, a couloir opened up with lively rockfall. The couloir ended on a cornice compounded by a huge boulder we had to climb over. A steep grassy ledge offered some relief before gaining a wide couloir, which was climbed without a safe belay: a station on a single bolt. Another series of steep grassy ledges brought on a monolithic slab with blind cracks. Ice hooks were very useful to climb this section. We reached a smooth plate with a very poor relief where we used

hooks to climb between cracks. Above the hook moves we gained an inclined rocky ledge where we began to fix almost vertical ropes. We accessed a corner with poor relief, but we were able to bolt it without any problems. After another corner we reached a system of cracks and grass. The hooks came out to help again. We found a nice ledge for a camp.

Further up, we freed a wide crack in wet and chilly weather. A very complicated couloir ended by a cornice and a complicated overhanging corner. A long internal corner revealed big lively edges as we made a belay station on an anchor bolt and settled into another camp. We fixed the main rope near two slanting cracks, using hooks to overcome them. We were climbing on a half rope on unpleasant lively slabs. Yet another steep grassy ledge opened up a long corner leading to the ridge straight under the top. From here, an easy ridge brought us to the summit. We spent a total of five days on the route, and placed 10 bolts. Members: O.P. Kolesov (leader), Sherstnev Igor, Lyalin Sergey, and Sherstnev Igor.

Recommendation to climbers: The specialty of this region is wet weather, especially in August, because of its proximity to Baikal. There is a lot of grass on the route, even on vertical rock. Hooks are necessary, and the rock is very tough, so I recommend bringing several drill bits, even for a Hilti.

O.P. KOLESOV, *Chairman of Federation of Mountaineering and Rock Climbing Republic of Buryatiya*, www.mountain.RU

Afghanistan

Noshaq (7,492m), first ascent in 25 years. The Oxus Mission, organized by Mountain Wilderness International, had two main goals: to show that it was again possible and not risky to visit the mountains of the High Hindu Kush in northeast Afghanistan, and to help organize a training scheme for young Wakhan Valley inhabitants who wish to become professional mountain guides, trekking guides, high altitude porters, or who want to arrange modern outdoor activities. This second goal, a project submitted to the Afghan Government one year ago by Mountain Wilderness, could get adequate funding from Italy and Europe and would help improve the socio-economic status of young people in this remote mountain area. Mountain Wilderness is convinced that training courses and accompanying structural improvements (such as new guest-houses, storage facilities for mountain gear, courses for management and basic English) could also pave the way toward the local population accepting a project for a Wakhan National Park, which seems to be on the agenda of Dr. Nouristani, the Afghan Minister for the Environment and Territory.

The three main organizing staff of the Mission were: Carlo Alberto Pinelli (Italy, Head of Mission); Giorgio Mallucci (Italy, technical and logistic chief);



Noshaq, showing the line of ascent.
Carlo Alberto Pinelli