

lot of downclimbing on front points and sections of high avalanche danger. Moro, who was faster, went ahead and was relaxing in base camp when he got a call from Ogwyn over the radio. Ogwyn had been hit by an avalanche and thought his ankle was broken. Moro, his cook, and the cook's assistant went to the rescue and helped Ogwyn down the moraine to base camp, from where he and Moro were evacuated the following day by helicopter.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, *Mountain INFO*, *CLIMB Magazine*

Ultrar (7,388m), southeast pillar, attempt. Christian Trommsdorff and I met at the beginning of October in Karimabad, Hunza. The earthquake did not appear to have done much damage, but enormous avalanches were sweeping the surrounding mountains. Our project was the unclimbed southeast pillar of Ultrar, which I had tried to climb in 2000. On that occasion our expedition didn't even reach the base of the pillar. One good thing about Ultrar is its short approach, which would allow easy escape to the valley and prevent us getting trapped by autumn storms. However, we first needed to return to Islamabad for a permit. Once there, though, we found everyone preoccupied with the earthquake and headed back without the necessary signatures. My memories of the 2000 expedition were a bit hazy, and our "two-day" approach took four. We established base camp at 4,200m, just in time for a big storm to deposit 60cm of fresh snow and force us back to the valley.

The crux of the ca. 3,000m-high pillar is probably a difficult rock buttress at 7,000m. After a long discussion we decided to try the climb in two stages: first we would try to reach a small col at 6,000m in order to thoroughly acclimatize; then, if conditions allowed, we would attempt a four-day ascent to the summit. On October 21 we left base camp with seven days food and fuel, hoping to reach the base of the pillar and climb the long couloir on the left flank while conditions were still cold. To reach the pillar we had to cross a serac-threatened glacier plateau, only one hour but a race against fear. Then up the long 45-50° couloir, hemmed on both sides by granite walls. By the time we reached 5,300m, where the gully became increasingly narrow, the warmth of the day, which exhausted us, was also releasing a bombardment of ice chunks. After two hours I felt threatened by a gigantic stalactite hanging 150m above, so we decided to climb rocky ground to the left. On belay after two pitches, ca. 15m to the side of the couloir, I suddenly heard a rumble. At first I thought it came from the seracs just left of the 6,000m col but in fact it was a slope above us (that we had allowed to settle for several days before starting the route). The avalanche channeled into the terrible funnel that, on a hunch, we had escaped from just one hour previously. It was obviously time to bivouac and continue tomorrow, when it would be colder.

Next morning we headed towards the crux of the couloir, a vertical water-ice pitch. It proved rotten, so we had to force our way up a rocky pillar on the left, pitching our bivouac tent only 100m higher than the day before. Next day we hoped to continue to the col and back before nightfall.

The weather was perfect, but we were unable to find the diagonal line we'd seen with binoculars from below and instead decided to climb to the top of the avalanche slope, which was now safe in the colder temperatures, and then traverse the arête to the col: a much longer alternative. Nightfall caught us climbing corniced terrain, and in this realm of vertical snow we felt it best to backtrack to a place where we could at least sit down. We hadn't reached our goal and were already less ambitious.

Next day, October 24—my birthday—a radio message from base camp announced the return of bad weather. We began a series of rappels that eventually got us back to base before nightfall. But each one was torture: should we come back up or not? We had to decide whether to leave our gear at the second bivouac. In the end we didn't and continued down. The expedition was finished. The first time I failed to set foot on the pillar. The second time I got half way. This story is unfolding in a mathematical manner: perhaps there will be a third time?

YANNICK GRAZIANI, *France*

Editor's Note: In May 2000 Jerome Blanc Gras, Graziani, Erwin le Lann, and Hervé Qualizza climbed several good rock routes on the small peaks around base camp, but unsettled weather prevented them setting foot on the pillar. The only other known attempt was made by Toshio Narita and two Japanese friends in August 1992. Bad weather forced them down from a height of 5,400m.

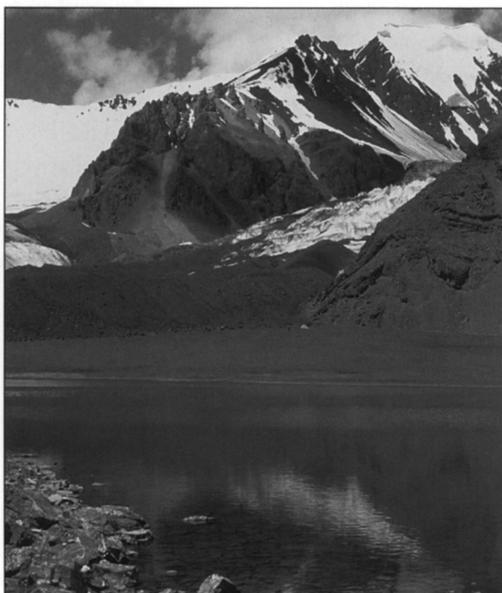
GHUJERAB MUZTAGH

"Boe Sar" (ca. 5,700m) and "Shah Izat Peak" (ca. 5,700m), first ascents. These two easy summits are located in the Ghujerab Muztagh, the range between the Shimshal and Ghujerab rivers [referred to as the Karun Koh group on the Miyamori Japanese maps—Ed.]. They lie close to the Boesam pass on the main route from Shimshal to the Ghujerab Valley and on toward the Khunjerab Pass, where the Karakoram Highway crosses the Chinese border.

With my friend Abdullah Bai, a Shimshal resident, teacher, and trekking guide, I reached the Boesam after a walk of two days from Shimshal village. We had help from a young porter, Abdul Mohamed, and also from the village. We established a comfortable camp near the lake situated just behind the ca. 4,800m pass.

Our initial goal was the first summit northeast of the pass. We climbed it in five hours on August 23. It was an easy, pleasant ascent on snow, with just three crevasses to cross (Alpine F, 900m of vertical gain on slopes of 35° maximum). Abdul Mohamed roped up with us and managed the climb without crampons. We descended our route and named the peak "Boe Sar" (in local dialect *sar* is *summit*, while *sam* is *pass*).

On the 24th Abdullah and I climbed the first summit northwest of the pass. We found an easy route horizontally across the glacier to the west of the pass, then walked up the little glacier falling from the summit. After crossing the bergschrund and climbing a 45° snow



Shar Izat Peak (ca. 5,700m) rises above the lake just north of the Boesam Pass. On the first known ascent of this peak Abdullah Bai and Francois Carrel followed the skyline (southeast) ridge in its entirety at PD. *Francois Carrel*