

scenery one minute, and walking past the memorial for Hans Christian Doseth and Finn Daeli the next. Thoughts of their deaths during the descent from the first ascent of the pillar were unavoidable and constantly lurking in our minds. On April 30, when we finally looked up at the stunning beauty of the line, we knew that the climbing ahead would take all we had—if we had it.

We'd heard some nasty stories about the intro gully, but it didn't look too active, probably due to our early-season arrival. It took us six days to ferry our gear and a 30-day supply of food and gas to the last sheltered spot, working mainly during the night. A two-day snowfall delayed our progress and plastered the entire pillar, but the sun soon tidied things up, and we left our fantastic base camp crew on May 5.

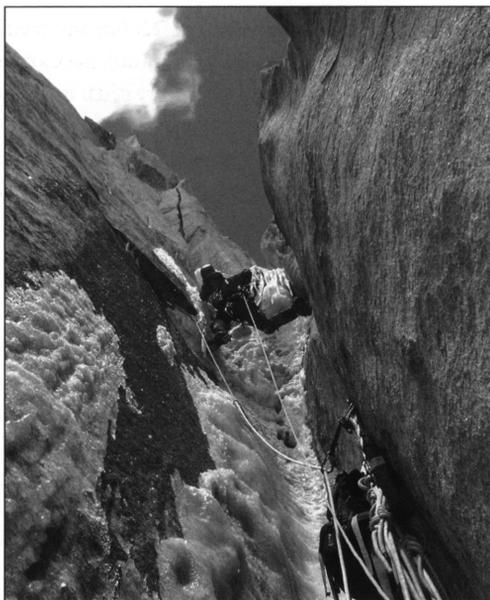
A long night and four more pitches took us across the gully to a semi-sheltered camp at the foot of the pillar. The next day, Bjarte was rammed by an avalanche while running out our 200m static rope across the snow-covered initial pitches. Luckily, the blocks that hit him were ice-free and he kept his stance, if not his cool.

Fantastic ice-filled crack lines took us up the lower part of the pillar to our next camp. Here we managed to drop Rolf's sleeping mat, and then Sigurd failed to put the lid on his piss bottle, leaving Rolf, who was now sleeping on top of his down kit, to marinate.

It was remarkable to climb the same ground we'd had in mental images from Stein P. Aasheim's book covering the 1984 ascent. After more than a week at the base of the upper pillar, fighting incredibly bad conditions, we finally managed to move camp into unknown territory. This is where Aasheim and Dag Kolsrud had descended in '84, thus extending their friends' food supply and ending the supply of photos.

Our last camp was pitched on the very apex of the upper pillar. (If anybody can come up with a more exposed campsite, let us know!) From here we fixed four ropes to below the snow rim, where a 70° Cerro Torre-style snow ditch took us to the summit ridge, and then on to the east summit at 6,230m. We climbed 2,100m in 55 pitches, the crux being around new-wave A3+. We spent 30 days on the wall, including three days for the descent.

STEIN-IVAR GRAVDAL, *Norway*



Stein-Ivar Gravidal leads overhanging mixed ground on the 49th pitch of the Norwegian Pillar, near the top of the head-wall. *Rolf Bae*

*Muztagh Tower, northeast face.* At 7,284m, Muztagh Tower is a prominent landmark on the way to most of the 8,000ers in Pakistan, yet there have not been many ascents, and there has never been an alpine-style ascent. Our goal was an alpine-style ascent of the unclimbed northeast face. Pavle Kozjek, Grega Kresal, and I set base camp on the Biange Glacier. During our approach trek, Grega had gotten increasingly ill, and after a couple of painful days, we decided that it was



The line of Magic Lost (1,800m, VI W15 M5) on the northeast face of Muztagh Tower (7,284m). After Pavle Kozjek's death in a fall from the ridge atop the face at ca 6,800m, Dejan Miskovic descended to the south to 5,400m, where he was rescued by helicopter. *Dejan Miskovic*



Pavle Kozjek entering the crux mixed band (sustained M5) at ca 6,500m on the northeast face of Muztagh Tower. *Dejan Miskovic*

best for him to be airlifted from base camp to Skardu and then home.

With our friend safe, Pavle and I could concentrate on the mountain. We set our advanced base camp 30 minutes from the northeast face on the Younghusband Glacier. After acclimatizing, sleeping at 6,050m on a neighboring mountain, we prepared for the climb. Our goal was to be as fast as possible, so we climbed unroped. We carried only the bare minimum: a 110m, 5mm Kevlar rope, four pitons, four screws, a stove, a tent fly, gels, and drink mixes.

We started climbing at 2:30 a.m. on August 24. The first snowfield went smoothly, and by dawn we were over the first rockband (W15 M5). Clouds enveloped us as we continued to the top of the second icefield (55°-75°) and reached a maze of thin ice, snow, and steep rock (sustained M5). Our pace had slowed a bit, partly because of the lack of oxygen and partly due to the more committing climbing. The last 150m were 80° snow, and it took some effort to dig ourselves a path to the ridge crest at 6,800-6,900m.

We found ourselves on an exposed ridge riddled with cornices, and buffeted by a cold wind. Because we topped out at 7 p.m., we decided to dig a snow hole on the ridge. After two cold hours, we were cooking inside our hole, feeling quite alright.

In the morning Pavle suggested going down, via the 1956 French route on the southeast ridge. As I was the rookie in the Himalaya, I went along with his decision. The day was cloudy with wind gusts up to 80 km/h, and we began moving

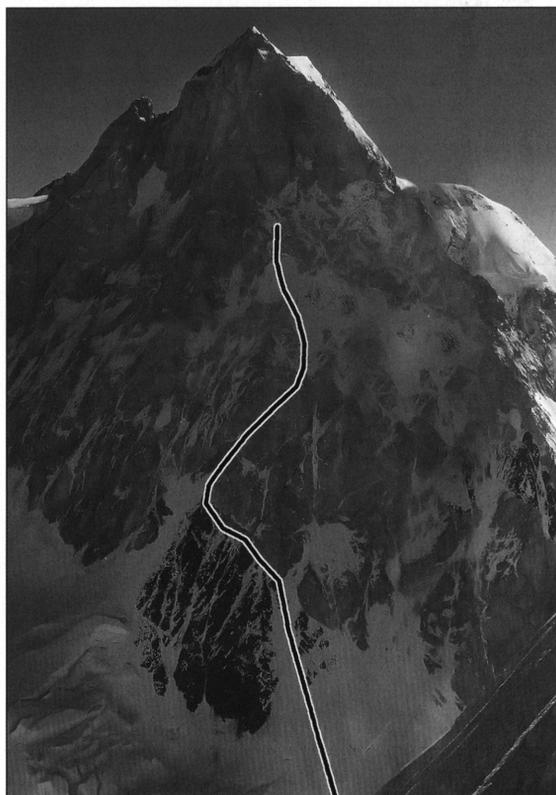
quite carefully along the southeast ridge. Pavle was carrying the rope inside his pack. Not long after we started the descent, at 10 a.m. on August 25, as Pavle approached the edge of a cornice, it gave way and he fell to his death. All of a sudden I was alone, with only the top fly of a tent, a gas canister but no stove, and a satellite phone. I phoned Grega Kresal, who was already recovering in Slovenia; he was one of the few people who could understand the position I was in. I knew I was too high to be picked up by helicopter; I would have to descend on my own at least to 5,500m.

It took me 15 hours over two days to descend to ca 5,400m. The first 400m were the hardest—harder than the climbing had been on the way up the northeast face. Meanwhile, I waited for news about a possible rescue. My hope was that a helicopter could at least drop a rope for the icefall at the bottom of the mountain. If nothing could be arranged, I would have tried to descend on my own, but it would have been very hazardous in the steep, heavily crevassed icefall. The phone battery died in the evening of August 26, and the weather was poor on the 26th and 27th, but I knew the forecast was good for the 28th, so I waited. Over two days I created two liters of fluids, mixing snow, isotonic drinks, and urine. I was doing what I needed to survive, but I also knew there were friends in Slovenia and Pakistan doing everything they could—dealing with permits, raising money, and arranging for Tomaz Humar, as well as some friends climbing in the Charakusa Valley, to fly to my base camp as quickly as possible. Humar was very determined and would not take no for an answer when people tried to get in the way of the rescue effort.

A chopper picked me up at 11 a.m. on August 28. I survived without major consequences: I lost 12kg and had some mild frostbite. The line I climbed in 17 hours with Pavle is named Magic Lost (1,800m, VI WI5 M5), after the loss of a great magician whose company it was my privilege to enjoy.

DEJAN MISKOVIC, *Slovenia*

*Skyang Kangri, west face attempt.* The first attempt on the west face of Skyang Kangri (7,545m) was made in 1980 by Michael Kennedy and Jeff Lowe, who reached ca 6,600m. In July 2008 a Russian expedition made a second attempt. The team included Alexander Kuharev (doctor), climbers Vladimir Arkhipov, Evgeniy Beliaev, Sergey Cherezov, Igor Loginov,



The line of the Russian attempt on the west face of Skyang Kangri (7,545m). The climbers reached 7,000m before descending because of illness and poor weather. *Courtesy Nikolay Zakharov*