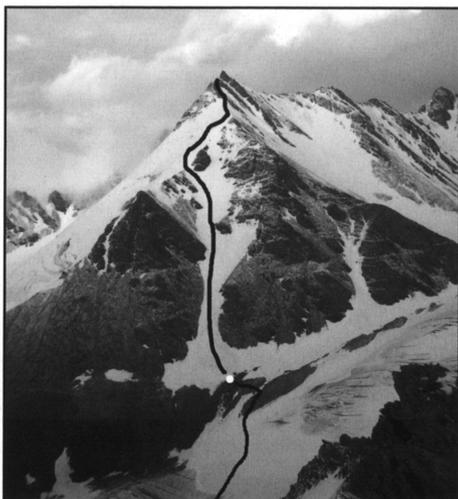


WESTERN KOKSHAAL-TOO

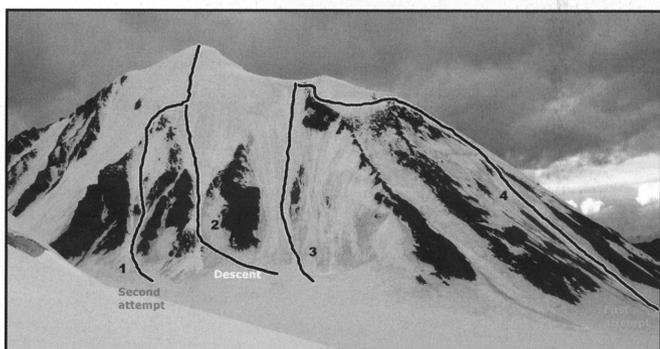
Dzhirnegaktu Valley, first ascents and new routes. Oktawian Ciez, Jakub Galka, Mariusz Norwecki, Piotr Picheta, Jakub Wrona, and I formed the Krakow High Mountain Club expedition to the Western Kokshaal-too. We wanted to explore Dzhirnegaktu Valley, which lies immediately west of the Kyzyl Asker Glacier basin, and between it and the Ak-Bai-Tal. Before we left we couldn't find any record of previous visits by mountaineers.

On August 3, after crossing three glacial runoffs, we established base camp at 3,800m. From here it took five days to transport all our gear up to an advanced base at 4,271m. During this period we discovered our satellite phone was not working, so on the 6th, in an attempt to find a signal, we climbed onto a nearby ridge, in the process reaching the top of two summits that we named Sputnik Hope (4,371m) and Long Spire (4,564m).

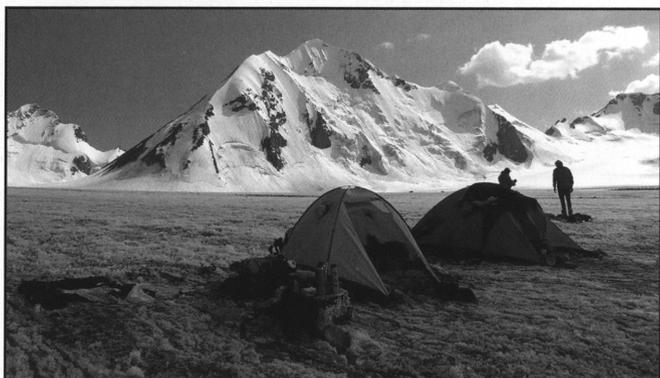
On the 9th we made an unsuccessful attempt on what was unanimously agreed to be the focal point of the entire valley, a peak we named Night Butterfly (5,056m). We tried the icy east ridge and got as far as a false summit, but big cornices prevented us from continuing. As we had made a late start, and the temperature was high, snow conditions became quite dangerous. A few days later Norwecki, Picheta, Rowna, and I tried again, this time from the south. We reached the top at 8 a.m. after eight hours climbing.



Pk. 4,530m from the west. The attempt from the Oshairak Valley stopped within 30m of the summit. Ben Logan



Night Butterfly from the south, showing (1) south face ascent and (2) descent. (3) is the descent used after the failed attempt (4) by the east ridge. Tomasz Owerko



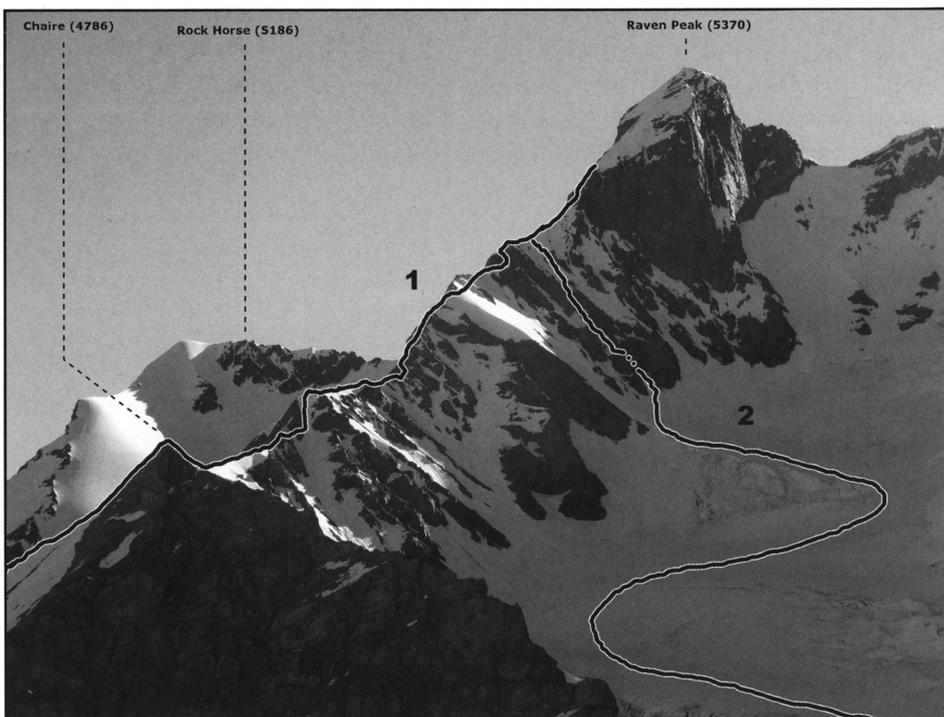
The north side of Night Butterfly (right) and Pik Uigur from advanced base on the Dzhirnegaktu Glacier. Tomasz Owerko



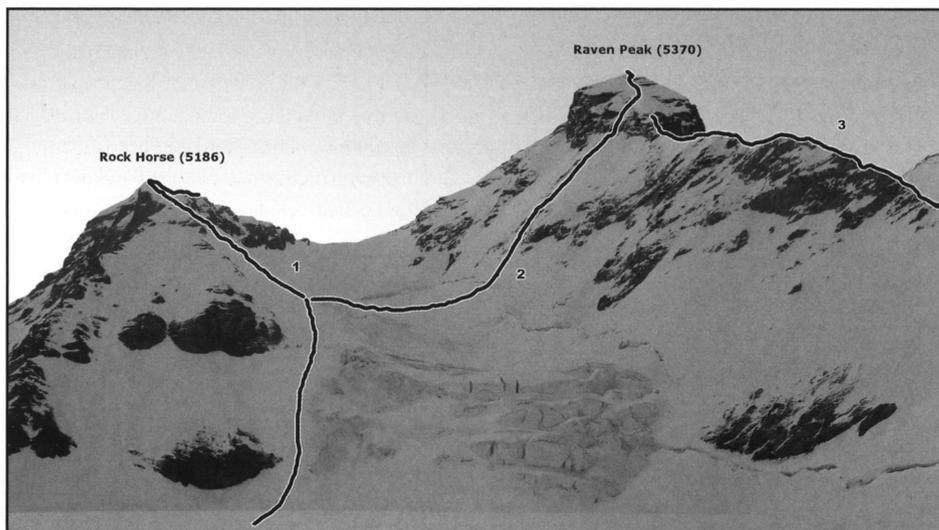
Map of Dzhirgagaktu. Tomasz Owerko

On the 12th Ciez, Galka, and Picheta tried Pik ca 5,370m on the east rim of the upper glacier basin. The west ridge looked the logical line, but thin ice, poor protection, and fragile rock turned them back not far from the summit. The rope got stuck on the first rappel, and they were only able to retrieve a short section. This later saved Ciez, who was tied to it when he fell into a crevasse. The round trip from camp lasted 27 hours. A few days later Ciez and Galka returned, and in a 24-hour continuous round trip from camp climbed and rappelled (from Abalakovs) the 700m north face. The summit was named Raven Peak.

During the expedition we reached 12 summits: three above 5,000m; four high 4,000ers, and five low 4,000ers. However, the main goal, and the highest



Raven Peak from southwest with (1) attempted route on west ridge and (2) descent. Tomasz Owerko



Rock Horse with (1) Norwecki-Picheta route from west, (2) north face direct of Raven Peak, and (3) attempted route on west ridge. These peaks were first climbed by Soviets, most likely in 1985, along the skyline ridge. Tomasz Owerko

mountain in the valley, Pik 5,632m, was not reached. [Editor's note: although there is no evidence that climbers operated in the Dzhirnagaku prior to this expedition, archive Soviet documents show that Pik 5,632m was climbed in the 1980s from the Kyzyl Asker Glacier via the ridge over Rock Horse and Raven Peak. It seems likely this was in 1985, when a large Kazakh expedition led by Kazbek Valiev climbed the west face of Kyzyl Asker over eight days in August. It also seems likely that other peaks climbed on the Kyzyl Asker-Dzhirnagaku divide by the Krakow team were previously climbed by Soviets.]

Apart from peaks mentioned above, we climbed: Rock Horse (5,186m, west ridge, Norwecki-Picheta); Butterfly's Leg (4,865m, west ridge, Galka-Norwecki-Picheta, a cairn was found on the summit); Pik Krakow (4,841m, Galka-Owerko-Picheta); Pyramide (4,812m, Picheta, but thought to have been climbed before); Chaire (4,786m, the top of the west face of Raven Peak leading to the latter's west ridge, Ciez-Galka-Picheta); Pik Five Keeps (4,711m, Picheta, thought to have been climbed before); Pony (4,705m, south couloir, Owerka-Picheta); and Butterfly Effect (4,602m, west ridge, Galka). We also reached the Uigur Pass (4,631m) on the frontier ridge between Pik 5,102m and Uigur (4,979m). There are still four good virgin peaks left, two above 5,000m.

Throughout our stay the weather was unstable and the temperature often too high for safe climbing conditions. We also experienced an annoying föhn wind, which not only warmed the air dramatically, but also kept breaking the Chinese tents we'd bought in Bishkek. We often started out in the middle of the night. Ice was often very thin and buried under loose snow. The rock is mainly schist and quartzite, very fractured and folded. Finding a good belay on this was almost impossible. We also found the glaciers tricky, especially higher up where there were moderately sized crevasses concealed by a thin layer of snow. For more information visit kw.krakow.pl/kokshal2010.

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