

Andrzej led the next pitch (M6). We chopped off the bolt belays here as they were partly covered in ice and damaged. Four pitches of WI4 and 5 took us to another small icefield. Down to the right we cut out a shelf and bivouacked, sitting in our sleeping bags. The night was starry and frosty, ideal weather.

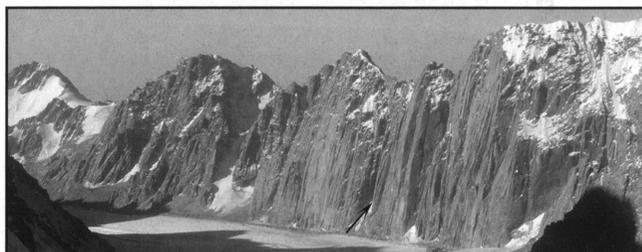
Next day we climbed from the icefield (WI4) and reached an off-width, our high point of 2009. Andrzej was unable to lead the crack free, having to rest on a Camelot 6. There was no time to repeat the pitch, but we estimate this crux passage as M8- 1pa.

There were no more bolts from our previous attempt, but the climbing was easier. We climbed four pitches, up to M4 and UIAA IV+, to reach the crest of the north ridge and continued on easy ground. Below the north summit we ate and left most of our gear. We reached this foresummit (5,150-5,200m) with thick clouds forming and the sound of thunder. We were probably no more than half an hour of easy scrambling/walking from the true summit but, worried about lightning on this exposed crest, decided to skip it. We descended quickly to our gear and rappelled three successive 100m couloirs on the east face. At 11 p.m. we started down a steep, complex glacier and eventually reached advanced base.

We named the route Cztery Pory Roku (Four Seasons, M8- 1 rest point, WI5, UIAA IV+). The first 12 pitches have bolted belays. The sixth pitch has two bolts for protection, the seventh one, the eighth two, and the 13th a bolt and a piton. The weather was good throughout the expedition. It only snowed on two nights.

MICHEL KROL, *Poland*

*Editor's Note: This route lies on the north face, which drops 700m from north summit to glacier. It finishes via the upper section of the 2002 British route on the north ridge. The new line lies well left of the 2010 Swiss route, No Shachlik, and the 2009 Belorussian-Russian route, the latter incorrectly marked in AAJ 2011.*



East-facing Great Walls of China. Highest summit is on right. Arrow marks start of Border Control and Quantum of Solace. *Lindsay Griffin*

*Great Walls of China, east face, Quantum of Solace. After two failed attempts with Wolfgang Russegger and Thomas Senf during our 2010 expedition to the southeast face of Kyzyl Asker (5,842m), I knew I'd go back. I would not have chosen the steep 1,200m line, with a variety of difficult ice and rock sections tried by many alpinists without success, were it not a real test of both my climbing skills and mental strength. But after a long winter trip to Scotland, months of endurance training, and a fast ascent of Mont Blanc, I felt perfectly prepared for the endeavor.*



Spot the line. Initial section of Quantum of Solace. Iced chimney visible farthest top left is taken by Border Control. *Ines Papert*



Papert transfers from hard mixed to hanging ice on Quantum of Solace. *Ines Papert Collection*



On lower section of Quantum of Solace. *Ines Papert*

On our trip through Kyrgyzstan to base camp, I was accompanied by my 11-year-old son Emanuel. We lived modestly with nomads for several weeks, which was such a fulfilling experience. My friends Wolfgang Kurz and photographer Franz Walter accompanied us on our travels. Exploring Kyrgyzstan while riding on a horse with my son was a wonderful, intense experience.

In my luggage I brought a paraglider, flying recently having become a new passion. Getting a bird's eye view of the landscape, after climbing a mountain, and peacefully gliding down to the valley like a soaring bird is a wonderful combination. Wolfi and I climbed many mountains just so we could paraglide and land in front of our yurt camp.

We met my climbing partners, Charly Fritzer and Wolfgang Russegger, at the start of September. Already acclimatized, I was euphoric when they arrived, due to the joy of seeing them plus the anticipation of climbing the mountain.

Just before reaching base camp our enthusiasm came to a halt when our truck got stuck in swamps for several days. Intense rainfall had soaked the tracks, and there was no possibility of continuing our ride. Twenty km and 1,000m of altitude separated us from our proposed base camp site below Kyzyl Asker. Transporting our gear to the base of the mountain on foot would be an enormous challenge, but at the last minute our driver managed to free the truck. Wolfi and Franz left with my son; the pain of parting was almost unbearable. It's a pain that normally fades when the task at hand begins, but I was condemned to idleness.

My two partners became sick at camp. At an altitude of 4,000m and with the cold preventing a speedy recovery, we began the tiresome job of transporting material to advanced base. It took 10 days.

A weather check with Karl Gabl in Innsbruck promised a few days of stable high pressure, so at 4 a.m. on September 12 we began our ascent of the steep ice route. At 10 a.m., at nearly 5,300m, we reached the only feasible bivouac site. With the sun starting to melt the ice and the threat of severe ice fall, we decided to wait till the following morning, but when Charly showed signs of cerebral edema onset, we rappelled immediately.

He recovered at advanced base, but with health problems weakening the whole team, I had to accept that another attempt on the mountain of my dreams was not practicable. Should we quit and go home? No! We looked for an alternative, a reward for all our efforts. We found solace on the Great Walls of China, which rise 600m from the unnamed glacier south of Kyzyl Asker. There we discovered

a very steep ice line. Wolfi and I began at first light. Steep and overhanging sections of ice and rock, with tricky protection, required all my psychological strength and climbing skills. Fragile ice pillars, overhanging rock/mixed sections alternated with waist-deep powder, where we found little stability. With great concentration I reached the crest of the watershed ridge shortly after 11 a.m. Satisfied, I belayed Wolfi, who emerged smiling. We named our route Quantum of Solace (14 pitches, WI7+ M7).

On the 29th, just before the onset of winter, the truck reached us. We drove back to civilization through a fierce snowstorm, back to a long-awaited warm shower. Franz Walter made a film of our trip to base camp: Tyndýk, Reise durch Kirgistan. See [tyndyk.com](http://tyndyk.com) for background information and trailers.

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*Editor's note: The highest point of the Great Walls, 5,186m, is its northernmost summit. The only previous route climbed on the east face is Border Control (13 pitches, ED2, WI5 Scottish VII/VIII mixed, A1, Robertson-Tresidder, 2004; see AAJ 2005). This lies on the more southerly, lower section of the walls, following a steep, icy chimney and two snow patches to the end of the hard climbing, where the pair terminated the route just below the watershed ridge. It was dark, they had dropped their water at the base of the climb, they had no stove, and the main summit on this section of the Walls was a long way up to the left.*

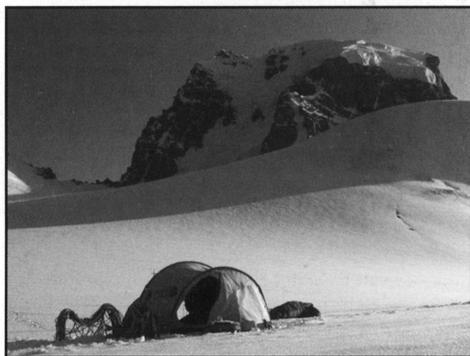
*Quantum of Solace, which reached the ridge, starts up the same initial snow slopes as Border Control but then takes a recessed line to the right, facing more or less east. Border Control faces more northeast. The prize of reaching one of the main summits of the Great Walls awaits future parties.*

*Pik Oleg (4,859m), Arbuz; Pik Byeliy (5,697m), south ridge; other ascents and ski descents. Our group of eight was inspired by photographs provided by Paul Knott, who visited this area in 2005 (AAJ 2006). We had a variety of ideas of peaks to attempt and ski descents to make around the heads of the Kotur and Fersmana Glaciers. We allowed 24 days for the round trip from Slovenia, which gave little margin for error. We ended up having an adventure beyond our expectations.*

The team, comprising climbers with a wide variety of age and experience, had multiple aims: to give younger members their first experience of higher altitude glaciers and mountains, to ski from summits up to 5,000m, to climb new routes up to 5,000m, and to make the first ascent of Pik Byeliy, the highest unclimbed independent summit in the Western Kokshaal-too.

Deciding not to use porters, we took only a driver and cook, who would remain at base camp. We left Bishkek on July 17 and next day reached 3,500m, before being stopped by a 30-hour snowstorm. When this cleared, our Ural truck got stuck in mud, and we spent the best part of two days digging it out. It was only on the 22nd that we set up base camp north of the Kotur Glacier, already acclimatized to altitudes over 4,000m.

Next day Peter Bajec, Ursa Erman, Alenka Klemencic, Miha Lapanja, and Tina Leskosek climbed Pik Alpini (4,578m), on the east side of the entrance to the Kotur, and continued south



Morning sun strikes camp on 4,900m col south of Byeliy. Slovenian route follows snow and ice through buttress/ridge facing camera, over capping seracs, and left up easier snow slopes to summit. In 2000 Americans, approaching from China, attempted left ridge, completing rock section before thunderstorm forced them down from snow arête 200m below summit. *Blaz Grapar*