

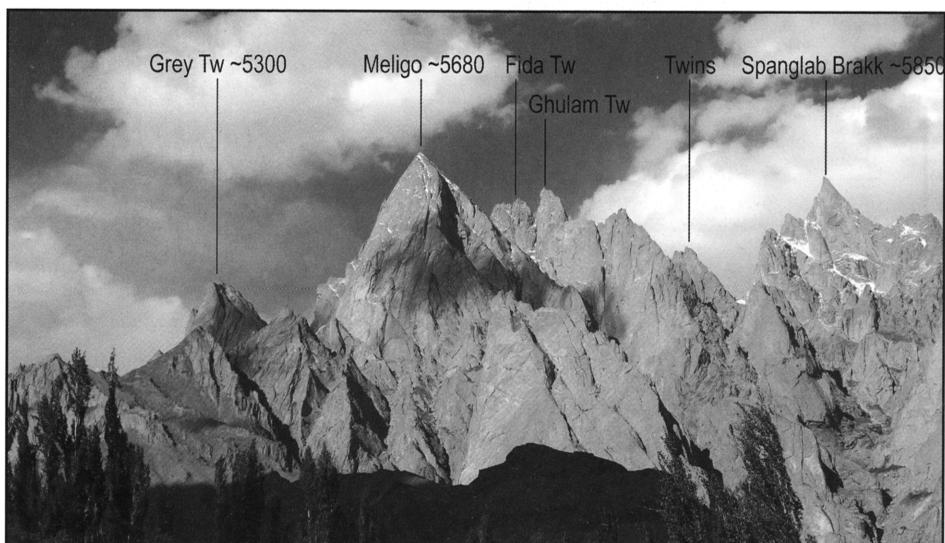
base camp. Out of the 20 days we spent in the mountains, 15 had been devoted to pushing the route forward. We didn't achieve our goal but plan to return.

LUKASZ DEPTA, *Poland*

*Tagas Group, Khane Valley exploration.* Between September 10 and 22, Doychin Boyanov, Mihail Mihaylov, and I explored the Khane Valley to investigate possibilities for big wall routes and virgin summits. It lies parallel to and immediately south of the Nangma Valley. There is almost no information about alpine ascents, and the only named summits are those that border the Nangma Valley and those visible from the village of Khane, in the Hushe Valley, and from pastures along the Khane River.

According to locals the first foreigners to visit the valley were Koreans in 2001. They came twice, making unsuccessful attempts on what we think was the southwest face of Agil (ca 5,680m). During their second visit they climbed a 250m rock wall close to their 4,450m base camp, the only route known to have been completed from the inner valley. Also, an American trekker is reported to have reached the base of Shingu Charpu (Great Tower, 5,850m, though possibly higher) on the watershed with the Nangma. In 2009 a small but beautiful pointed peak called Nauari Brakk (ca 3,250m), which lies directly above the village, was climbed by local Ali Mehmed and his son Ruhali Ali.

Access is from Khane (2,800m), on the east bank of the Hushe River, and unlike the Charakusa no special permit is required. Starting up the left bank of the Khane River, it is a five-hour walk, partly along a damaged irrigation channel, to reach a large grassy plain at 4,000m, which we called First Terrace. From here a 450m ascent leads to the Korean Base Camp (Second Terrace) at the base of the valley descending from the north cirque. Continuing upstream for one hour leads to large sandy flats at 4,650m, where we had our base camp—the last good spot with water and hard soil. It is possible to reach the Khane icefall in another one and a half hours.

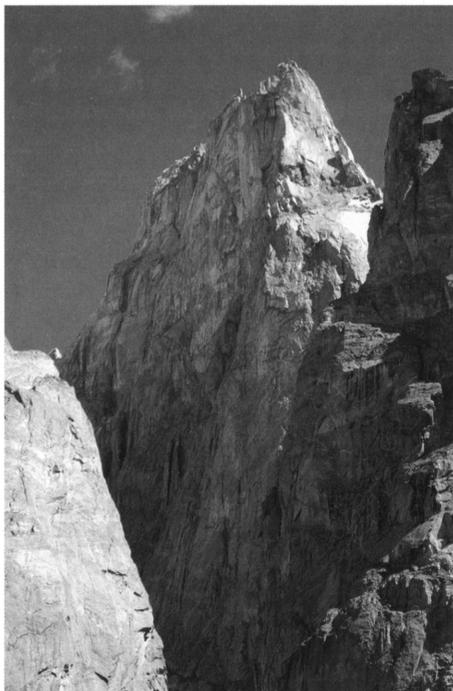


Southern peaks of Khane Valley from southwest. *Nikolay Petkov*

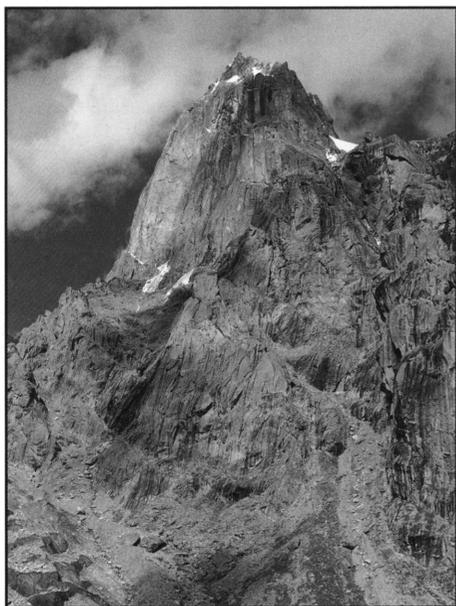
We found the peaks impressive and took many photographs, which we hope will prove interesting to the mountaineering community. Apart from the higher peaks, there are many needles and towers immediately above the valley floor (mostly on the northern slopes) that present 300-400m high-quality granite walls.

For reference we used recent information and maps by Polish cartographer Jerzy Wala, the 2005 Year Book of the Korean Students' Alpine Federation, and local knowledge. Altitudes are GPS; approximate altitudes have been extrapolated from Google Earth. In naming features we first looked for existing local names, then those given by the Korean teams, and finally applied our own. Peak numbers have been designated by Jerzy Wala on his sketch map of the Tagas Group. A comprehensive report is available on the AAJ website.

NIKOLAY PETKOV, *Bulgaria*



Tangra Tower (Peak 33, ca 5,620m), west face in profile. In sunlight to left is part of south face of Rila (Peak 36, ca 5,600m). *Nikolay Petkov*



Agil (Korean name, Peak 24, ca 5,680m), southwest face. *Nikolay Petkov*



Hidden Tower (Peak 59, ca 5,830m) from west. *Nikolay Petkov*