

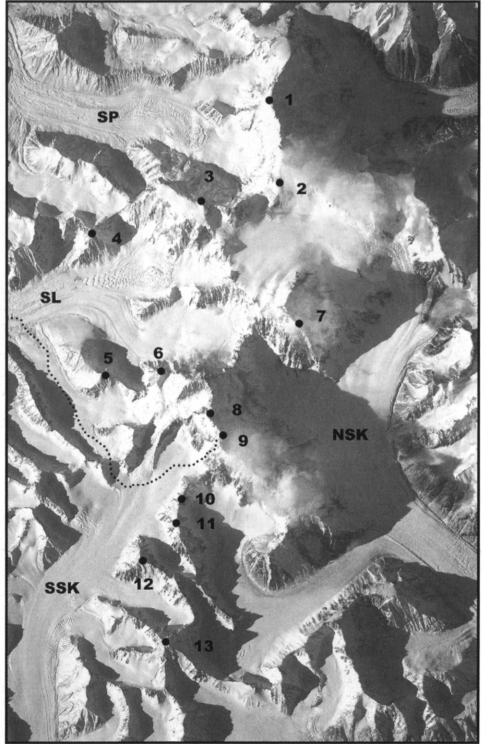
*South Shukpa Kungchang Glacier, various ascents.* In December 2009 Mark Richey e-mailed a photo of a beautiful gray granite rock peak he'd seen from base camp on an expedition to the Indian Karakoram. He was recruiting for another visit to the region and invited me to pull a team together to join him. Little did I know that the invitation was part of his plan to coerce my husband, Freddie Wilkinson, into joining him for another attempt on Saser Kangri II. Mark is a good salesman, but does that matter when it comes to good-looking granite?

Our plans for a 2010 expedition didn't pan out, so it was a year later that Mark, Freddie, Steve Swenson, Emilie Drinkwater, Kirsten Kremer, and I met in Delhi. From the village of Tigur, in the militarized zone just miles from the fabled "line of control," we trekked for three days up the Chameshan Lungpa Valley to a hanging meadow above the Sakang Lungpa Glacier, a beautiful base camp site at 5,180m that the 2009 team had reconnoitered.

There the two teams split, with the ladies continuing up the Sakang Lungpa to establish an advanced camp under Peak 6,258m, below the huge south face of Plateau Peak (which we originally misidentified as 6,135m, based on a vague map of the area).

Emilie, Kirsten, and I made two attempts on Peak 6,258m (one with a chilly open bivouac) in the high heat of July. The walls gave good quality crack climbing, but when the sun was shining, melted-out ledges and the entire summit ridge constantly bombarded us with rock and ice. With conditions that were too dangerous and only two weeks remaining, we looked for other options.

Back at base camp the guys showed us photos they'd taken from their high camp under Saser Kangri II. They'd experienced similar heat issues, even on its much higher southwest face, so we all looked for a plan B. With the help of our awesome Sherpa staff, we broke down our



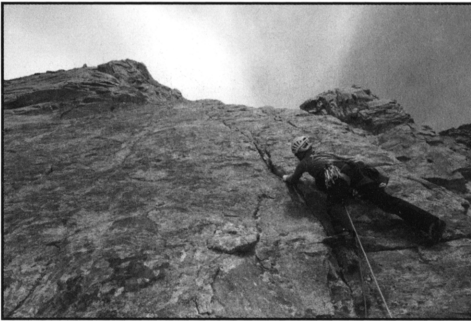
Saser Kangri Group. South Shukpa Kungchang Glacier runs north-south. American approach to Saser Kangri II marked. (SP) South Phukoche Glacier. (SL) Sakang Lungpa Glacier. (SSK) South Shukpa Kungchang Glacier. (NSK) North Shukpa Kungchang Glacier. (1) Saser Kangri IV (7,415m). (2) Saser Kangri I (7,672m). (3) Plateau Peak (7,287m). (4) Peak 6,258m. (5) Lookout Peak (6,252m). (6) Stegasaurus (6,660m). (7) Saser Kangri III (7,495m). (8) Saser Kangri II, west summit (ca 7,480m). (9) Saser Kangri II (7,518m). (10) Saserling (6,100m). (11) Pumo Kangri (6,250m). (12) Tsok Kangri (6,585m). (13) Peak 6,825m (unclimbed). *Image courtesy of Image Science & Analysis Laboratory NASA Johnson Space Center ISS022-E-7162*



Saserling (left) and Pumo Kangri from west, showing routes of first ascents. *Janet Bergman Wilkinson*



Unclimbed Peak 6,258m, showing two lines attempted during 2011. *Janet Bergman Wilkinson*



Janet Bergman during first ascent of Saserling. *Freddie Wilkinson*

high camp on the Sakang Lungpa and joined the guys on the South Shukpa Kungchang Glacier, to have a closer look at several promising unclimbed peaks.

As seems often to be the case, all our activity happened in the final week of the trip. On August 5 and 6, Emilie and Kirsten (I was in the throes of a 24-hour stomach bug) climbed the northwest face of Pumo Kangri (6,250m, PD/AD), a striking ice and snow peak across from camp. They climbed

unroped for all but the final pitches and rappelled through the night with a single rope. (They'd anticipated more snow than ice but got the opposite.) Freddie and I high-fived with them on their final rappels the next morning, as we climbed the same initial ice slope to approach Saserling (ca 6,100m). We reached the summit by a beautiful south-facing, seven-pitch rock rib of IV 5.9. Finally, on the 8th and 9th Emilie, Freddie, Kirsten, Mark, and I skied across the glacier to a high bivouac, from where we simul-climbed the south ridge of

Stegosaurus (6,660m, PD/AD), a dinosaursque peak west of Saser Kangri II with a 150m corniced ridge traverse to the summit.

We ladies now headed home, leaving the guys, who had two weeks remaining and were sufficiently acclimatized to have another stab at Saser Kangri II.

JANET BERGMAN WILKINSON, AAC

## ZANSKAR

*Reru Valley, various ascents.* Two flights, three days of bum-bruising off-road driving, and two days of scenic hiking brought us to our base camp (4,600m, 33°16'19.52" N, 76°54'20.20" E) in an arena of unclimbed mountains. It was September 1, and we were in a western branch of the Reru Valley (sometimes as Raru), known locally as the Tettleh (Tetli) Valley, and rising from Onkar. Our goal was supposedly unclimbed R6 (6,177m on the Sakamoto map and the highest in the valley; see *AAJ 2010*). The team comprised Johnny Bull, Robin Jones, Kunal Masania, Johnny Moodie, Joe Prinold, Dominic Southgate, liaison officer Anupam Mukherjee, and me. With so many of us, we split into two teams of four and approached R6 from opposite flanks. One team would go up a steep gully on the east side, while the other would climb the icy and