

July 8 at night. The climbing was conducted amidst unstable weather; we found the first part of the wall very covered with snow and ice, with avalanches very often. This made going up to the shoulder, where we placed CII, more difficult. We used two 60-meter and one 10.5-meter ropes, one set of stoppers, two sets of microcams, four sets of Friends, 25 quickdraws, and 40 carabiners to overcome the perfect cracks of the steep wall.

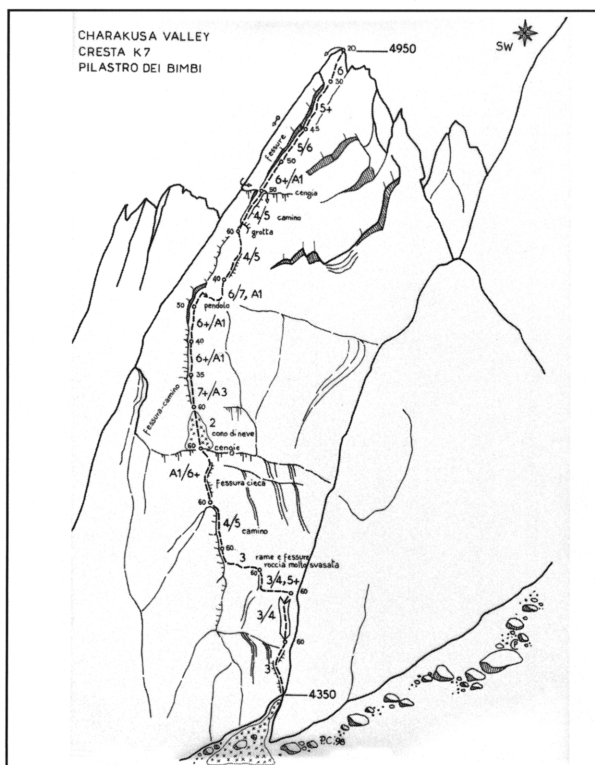
JORGE COUCEIRO, *Spain*

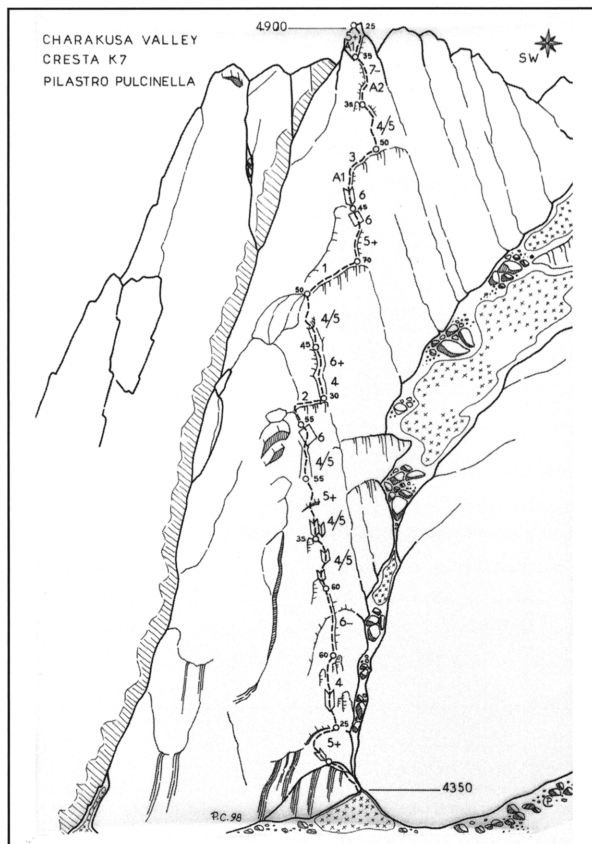
*Drifika, Second Ascent.* It was reported that in July, Angelo Rusconi, Luciano Gimpa, Simone Rossetti, and Gino Hora (Italy) made the second recorded ascent of Drifika (6447m) via its north ridge. Hora stopped ca. 100 meters below the summit; the others carried on to the top on July 31. This was the route of first ascent as well. (*High Mountain Sports*196)

*Hushe Valley, Various Ascents.* Giuseppe Masdea, Maurizio Garota, Danilo Valsecchi, Corrado Valsecchi and I, all members of the Lecco Group of the Italian Alpine Club, arrived at Charakusa Base Camp July 19, after a very comfortable and easy approach. After a few days of reconnaissance in the vicinity of Base Camp, we realized the multiplicity of climbing opportunities the place offered. Within two hours' walk from camp, a beautiful pillar (the second of K7, ca. 4950m) split up the middle by an obvious crack attracted our attention. We made a first attempt to climb it via the southwest face and within the first few pitches realized that the granite is solid and very beautiful, but the cracks are horribly flaring. This made the climb more difficult than we had first anticipated.

After climbing 300 meters, we came to a ledge that ran the entire length of the face, which allowed us to traverse to a couloir and then, with a series of double rappels, to descend easily to the base. After a day of rest we returned to the wall and, after 13 hours of climbing, we were able to reach the summit of the pillar via the beautiful crack, which had a very difficult section in the middle. We climbed the final pitches in a storm that impeded us more than a little. We propose the name *Pilastro dei Bimbi* ("Children's Pillar," VI 7+ A3, 650 meters) for the formation.

After a couple of days of rest at Base Camp, we decided to move our climbing gear to





the base of another pillar (the fourth of K7, ca. 4900m) about three hours' walk from camp. By now we had been here for some time and the weather was always the same: the mornings would be good, at 2 p.m. there would be a little snow and after about three hours it would grow clear again.

This made us decide to fix the first few pitches on the southwest face to take better advantage of the good weather. The next day we climbed around 200 meters, fixing the route and then descending to camp. We went back up on the route the next day; the climb, *Pilastro Pulcinella* ("Punch's Pillar," VI 7 A2, 550 meters) was wonderful, with dihedrals, cracks and chimneys unfolding in a logical succession that spontaneously revealed the line of ascent. In the late afternoon, in the midst of the daily storm, we reached the top. We

returned to Base Camp very satisfied with our climb and spent a few days enjoying the tranquility of the area.

We took an inventory of our remaining gear and realized (to the great delight of some) that we had only a little left and that therefore we could no longer aspire to any grand projects. However, above Base Camp was the beautiful pinnacle of The Dog's Knob (ca. 5400m), climbed by an English team some years before. Their route (V 6+A1, 250 meters) followed the crack that perfectly divides the mountain in two from base to summit. I don't think any alpinist could resist the temptation to climb such a beautiful wall. Thus we found ourselves struggling up the steep moraine that brought us to the base of the route. The team of Maurizio Garota, Danilo Valsecchi and Corrado Valsecchi climbed it on July 29; they were followed by Giuseppe Masdea and I on July 31. The climb was fantastic and extremely satisfying; in the middle of the daily dose of snowfall, we embraced one another on the summit, conscious of having had a fantastic vacation in this little-frequented valley.

We took the trouble to leave the valley as clean as we had found it in the hopes that others who come after us will be able to enjoy the beauty, emotions and joy that we savored and that we brought home with us after this experience.

DARIO SPREAFICO, *Italian Academic Alpine Club*