

meters. All the members who took part in the expedition agree that the valley is ideal for expeditions and trekking. It is possible to easily reach a comfortable base camp surrounded by granite stone walls and untouched peaks.

CLUB ALPINO ITALIANO—ASSO

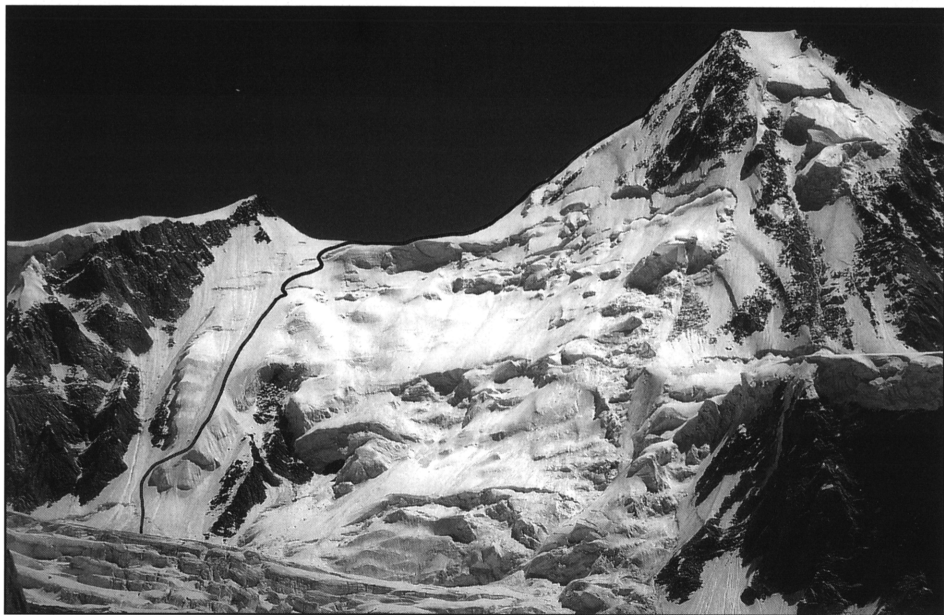
BATURA MUZTAGH

Karambar Glacier Area, Various Ascents, Previously Unreported. One of the least-visited regions in the Karakoram is the northwestern part of the Batura Muztagh. After extensive investigation in Alpine and Himalayan journals, we decided on the Karambar Glacier area where there are a lot of interesting 6000-meter peaks, most of them unclimbed until our trip. The highest peak in this area (and the only 7000-meter peak) is Kampire Dior (7143m) at the head of the Karambar Glacier. First climbed in 1975 by a Japanese expedition (1976 AAJ, p. 549), it was the only summit of interest for many years in spite of the fact that it is located in an area with hundreds of interesting possibilities.

Dieter Ruelker, Frank Polte, Joerg Ehrlich (leader) and I started on July 28, 1998, from Berlin. We established Base Camp on August 3 on a sunny grass plateau in Karambar Ilag (3300m), where the local farmers live during summer time. The inhabitants of this small village were very friendly, and the oldest of them even remembered the last mountaineering expedition that had been here in 1977.

We spent two days in reconnaissance trips along the Karambar Glacier and the side valleys, taking photos and drawing a sketch map of the area, which is not covered by good maps and is sometimes even shown wrong on the available maps. After more reconnaissance on August 11, we established one high camp at about 4300 meters near a small glacial lake at the head of Kutshkulun Valley. East of this beautiful camp site, the main Kutshkulun Glacier turns toward an ice-covered wall that rises to a prominent summit of ca. 6000 meters (which we would later, in agreement with the local people, name Kutshkulun Sar). After some hundred meters of easy approach from our camp, the Kutshkulun Glacier becomes heavily crevassed and rugged; the first attempt by Frank and me failed at about 4600 meters after hours of crossing, climbing and traversing. Dieter and Joerg tried it the next day, reaching about 4900 meters at the north side of the glacier very close to the steep rocky walls of the neighboring mountain ridge. After one rest day, we started in the early morning and reached a platform on the glacier at about 4900 meters, where we established our second High Camp.

The weather changed completely, forcing our descent to BC in heavy snow. On August 18, we started again from Karambar Ilag to reach High Camp I and, one day later, High Camp II. We started our attempt at 2 a.m. on August 20. We crossed the bergschrund roped up, then climbed the first 200 meters on ice up to 60 degrees before reaching a snowy ridge on the icy northwest face. We climbed about 12 pitches, belaying from deadman anchors because of insecure snow conditions and the absolute pre-dawn darkness. Four more pitches over crevassed terrain led us to the saddle, a big snow plateau just below the final summit pyramid, which we reached at 8 a.m. and where we left our bivouac gear. It took us about two hours to climb the last two pitches on unconsolidated snow up to 60 degrees, with the snow conditions getting worse with every step. Breaking through a one-meter cornice, I reached the summit at about 2 p.m. Celebrating this probable first ascent, we named the mountain Kutshkulun Sar. Our altimeters showed its elevation to be between 5860 and 5990 meters—just inside the permit-free category. Due to rapidly worsening weather, we hurried to descend.



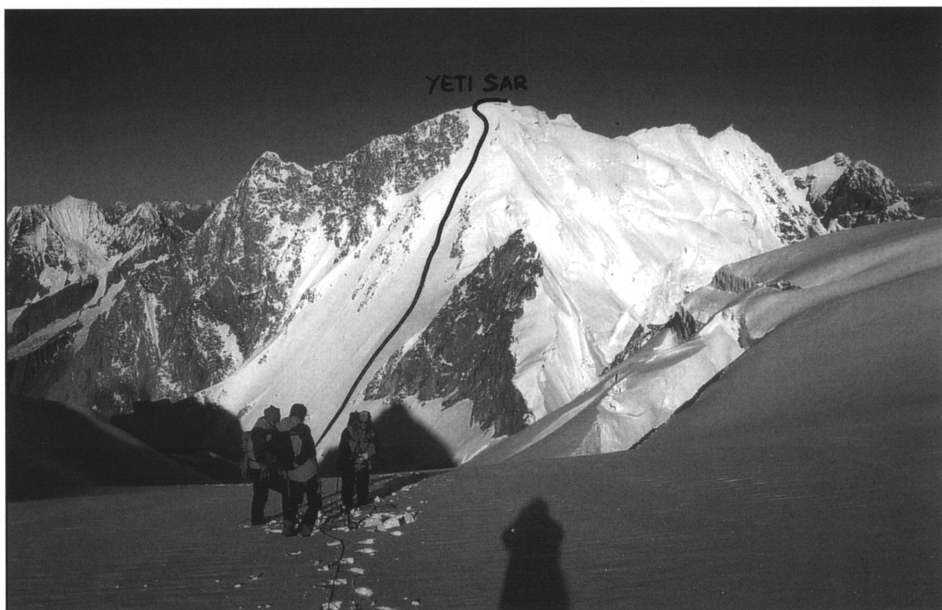
Kutshkul Sar, with the line of first ascent (Ehrlich-Polte-Rüelker-Walter, 1998) marked. The line by Woods-Jeffrey and Keller-Thomas (1999; see below) lay more to the left on the same face.

MARKUS WALTER

We were back at camp after 19 hours of continuous climbing and one hour of searching for our snow-covered tents. We descended to BC the next day, leaving the high camps for another summit attempt at the head of Kutshkul Glacier.

We rested at Karambar Ilag for three days of bad weather before ascending to High Camp II again. There we had to wait one more day for somewhat acceptable weather before ascending further up the Kutshkul Glacier on August 28. We carried rock gear for the expected summit pitches on our next mountain but were surprised to gain altitude without any technical difficulties. Snow and ice up to 50 degrees led to the corniced summit, where we had a great view of the whole mountain range in beautiful weather. We rested a long time on the summit before descending to our camp. We named the peak Sax Sar ("Saxon Spire") after our home region. Though some maps show its altitude to be between 6100 and 6432 meters, we registered its altitude at 5999 meters.

Though our time was nearly over, the weather still seemed to be good, so Dieter and I tried to make a speed ascent on another nice mountain in the upper Kutshkul area. Starting at 4 a.m., we reached the ca. 5980-meter summit at 10 a.m. after having climbed about 15 pitches of straightforward 50- to 55-degree ice. Just as we climbed onto the broad corniced summit ridge to reach the very top, the whole cornice broke off five meters away from us. We profited from this by getting a spectacular look northeastward down onto the far glacier through the new hole. The weather was incredibly good, offering a view of the High Pamirs (peaks Marx and Engels) in the far northwest to Nanga Parbat in the far southeast. To the west, the massive Koz Sar dominated the scenery. Before descending the same route, we named this third summit Yeti Sar (who knows who broke the summit cornice just before we reached it?). Then we climbed down, removed our High Camp II completely and reached



Yeti Sar (as seen from the descent on Sax Sar), with the line of first ascent (Rüelker-Walter, 1998) indicated. MARKUS WALTER

Camp I the same evening. The next day, Dieter and I carried loads from Camp I down to BC, from which we descended on August 31 with the help of the local farmers and their donkeys.

MARKUS WALTER, *Alpinclub Sachsen, Germany*

Kutshkulun Sar, Ascent. In August, a six-man international team visited the Karambar Glacier region of northern Pakistan. We were entirely self-funded. The Karambar Glacier lays at the northern limit of the Ishkoman Valley with the surrounding mountains forming the extreme western boundary of the Karakoram range. The whole region has received little attention in comparison with the widely traveled eastern Karakoram and was chosen for its new route potential on sub-6000-meter peaks.

Members Simon Woods, Jock Jeffrey, Walter Keller, Bryan Godfrey, William Cadell and Adam Thomas used Gilgit as a base from which to explore the upper reaches of the Ishkoman Valley. After organizing transport and cooks, they left Gilgit for a three-day drive to the road-head at Bad Swat. A two-day walk in gave access to Base Camp on the true right bank of the Karambar Glacier. From here, two weeks of exploration and reconnaissance of the Kutshkulun Valley (which runs due north from Karambar Ilag) ensued, the result of which was a decision to concentrate on the peaks at the head of the Kutshkulun Glacier, which runs north from the Karambar itself.

After many days reconnaissance and acclimatization, the team attempted a mountain known as Kutshkulun Sar (ca. 5900m). Following a two-day approach to the mountain via Advanced Base Camp, Camp I was established high on a ridge above a tributary of the Kutshkulun Glacier. From here, two teams comprising Woods and Jeffrey and Keller and Thomas climbed the initial slopes beyond camp to the start of the large and heavily crevassed