

weather improved. We climbed to Camp I, then, the next morning, went down a loose gully to a basin and climbed snow and ice couloirs through the mixed face to regain the ridge above the towers near our CII site. The climbing was technically reasonable, but the recent mild weather had stripped much of the snow to leave the slopes in very icy condition. We returned to BC, leaving the gear in place for next time.

We then had a frustrating period of poor weather, including one more plod back to CI, to try our patience. On August 6, we climbed back to CII. On the rocky ridge above this camp, we were surprised to find not only ibex tracks, but also a well-built cairn. Either someone had sneaked up, or more likely, the cairn had been built by an enterprising hunter. The route above CII had no in-situ gear or other signs of previous ascent. We rose before midnight the next day and set off at around 1 a.m., climbing in pitches with ice-screw belays. At one-third height, a flat area gave a rest, then a couple of hundred feet of snow allowed faster movement to the foot of the mixed ground. We started this section at first light, taking a meandering line up icy ramps and gullies between rock ribs at about alpine TD, but with fairly good rock belays. A rock shoulder gave a welcome rest, then an open ice slope led to the top, which was reached at about 9 a.m. We abseiled from rock anchors, taking a more direct line in descent than we had in ascent. We staggered into camp at 5 p.m. after 16 hours on the go. After a day off, our abseil descent continued in the dark with another pre-dawn start that saw us back to BC. The weather worsened.

Bill and Gus left for home August 14, but Stew and I had an extra week, so we sat out a few days of snow, then went back to our previously tried "training peak." This time the weather was kinder. The ascent was almost entirely on glacier terrain, with two bergschrund pitches that required a rope, and summit provided wonderful views of Shel Chakpa and K2.

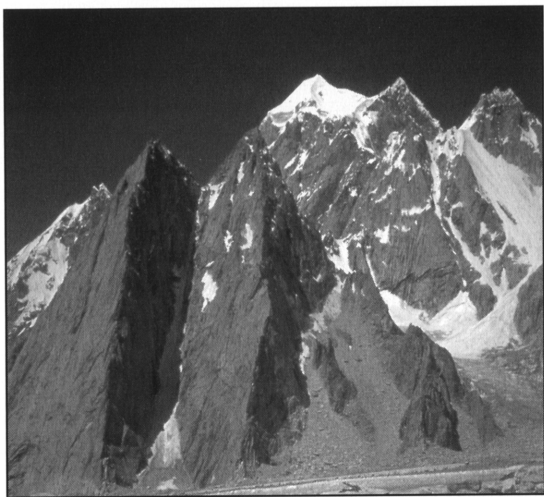
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Panmah Muztagh

Choktoi Glacier Area, Various Ascents. The team was composed of Luca Maspes, Emanuele Pellizzari, Massimo Sala and Gianni Zappa, plus geologist Paolo Biffi. We explored the Choktoi Glacier, which lays on the north side of the Latoks and ends at the foot of the east face of the Ogre. The approach is via the Panmah Glacier, taking a left (as one walks) just before the confluence with the Chiring Glacier. The area offers many climbing opportunities, but the weather was found to be from poor to bad. Very few sign of previous expeditions were noted on the glacier. Two spots for Base Camp were found at the beginning of the glacier, with rock and water, but quite far (from two to five hours) to the main climbable faces. The area offers great mountaineering but not really great rock climbing.

The team stayed on the glacier for 18 days. It snowed on nine of these, and on another three days we experienced bad weather. Massimo Sala and Gianni Zappa climbed an unnamed pillar about one hour from BC, experiencing difficulties up to 6a+. The descent was made with three rappels in an east-facing couloir, then with easy walking on a steep moraine. The ascent and descent was done in a day. Nothing was left behind beside the anchors for abseils. Maximum difficulties were up to UIIA VI+.

Emanuele Pellizzari, Luca Maspes and Gianni Zappa made an attempt on the Indian Face Arête, a prominent rock face about one hour from BC. The route ends on a pinnacle short of the summit of Latok III. The climb took three days. The team climbed three pitches on an afternoon, fixing the line for a successive attempt. Then it snowed for three days. On day one



The Indian Face Arête, with the summit of Latok III in the distance above. The Scott-Allen route follows the boundary of light and shadow, with the south wall in shadow. PAUL SCHWEIZER

of the real climb, the team added another eight pitches before bivouying on a poor and extremely rotten and dangerous snowy ledge. The day after, the team climbed another six pitches and bivouacked on a steep and snowy ledge (after day 1, we had no food). On the last day we climbed one pitch, then made the descent.

The climb is very hard, sustained and sometimes dangerous and difficult. Except for the first 70 meters and two short pitches in the middle, all the pitches are at least UIAA VI and A1. The team placed four bolts on the ascent: two at belays, one for protection on a very rotten part of rock (A2+ and VI) and one because the leader was caught by dark (subsequently, the hanger to this bolt

was removed). About two nuts, one sling (for a pendulum) and five stuck pitons were left on the route. We found nasty snow conditions.

The descent on the blank wall is a serious undertaking via rappels that are never shorter than 50 meters and as long as 59.8 meters. Most belays were made with two pitons or one single bolt. The overall difficulties involved 18 pitches up to UIAA VIII- and A3.

On the fifth pitch, we found a Wild Country #3 Friend with a carabiner and tied-off sling. At home, we discovered this was left by the Doug Scott/Sandy Allen party. After that piece, on the same pitch, we found difficulties up to VIII-. We found no further traces of climbing (pitons, scars, etc.). We feel the previous team did not do our line but took a crack toward the left (where the Friend was found) and did another line from then on. On the rappel, 50 to 60 meters from our high point, we found a piton with a sling at a bivouac site plus an empty gas cartridge. Via private correspondence, we determined that this piton was the high point of the Scott/Allen team.

Although the Scott/Allen party claimed a new route, and even though we went higher than they did, we feel our route remains a strong attempt but cannot be claimed as a new line or a summit. The next pitch after the Scott/Allen high point was rated VII and A3 (aid crux of the route).

Part of the team had to return home, but Luca Maspes, before moving into another valley and joining another team (see below), put up a new route (V, 400m) on a peak christened Simo Peak. Descent was made via an easy rock couloir.

EMANUELE PELLIZZARI

Biacherahi Tower, Hanispur South and Indian Face Arête, Ascents. The expedition was comprised of Muir Morton (leader), Tom Bridgeland, Sam Chinnery, Alasdair Coull, Neal Crampton, Dave Hollinger, Dan Long and Paul Schweizer. We set up Base Camp in early July on a strip of moraine on the north side of the Choktoi Glacier, directly across from the Indian