

*Yellow Wall, Attempt, and Kidnapping by Terrorists.* In July, Tommy Caldwell, Beth Rodden, John Dickey, and Jason "Singer" Smith traveled to the Karavshin region of the Pamir-Alai with the goal of establishing free routes in the area. On August 11, they reached a point some 1,000 feet up the Yellow Wall in the Kara-Su Valley. It is unclear whether this route had previously been climbed. The next day, they were taken hostage by members of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, who held them captive for six days before they were able to escape and reach the security of a Kyrgyz military post. Further details await clarification.

## PAKISTAN

*Pakistan, Mountaineering Developments.* Pakistan has opened peaks up to 6500 meters for climbing without liaison officers or peak fees, except in restricted areas. It is now possible to obtain 30-day visas on arrival at airports.

### Hindu Kush

*Dir Gol Zom, Ascent.* Our expedition members consisted of five seniors (Hidehiro Minamii [leader], Ken Ikeya, Yoshio Hirai, Shuzou Kinoshita, and Yasufusa Yokochi) with an average age of 61. Our goal was Dir Gol Zom (6778m), which lies at the top of the Upper Tirich Mir Glacier adjacent to Tirich Mir (7708m), the main peak of the Hindu Kush. Three of us were able to reach the summit on August 4 after many days' effort.

We left Islamabad by car on July 11 for the village of Uthur. As soon as we arrived there on the morning of July 14, we crossed Zani Pass and went up along the Tirich Mir Valley to our base camp at about 4800 meters with 45 porters. During the three-day approach to Shakhniyak, the narrow path was very comfortable to walk, as it was used by local people for their daily life. But after three days we were very exhausted, as the path at times crossed the slippery blue ice and moraines of the Lower and Upper Tirich Mir Glacier.

We set up Base Camp at 4800 meters on July 20 on a moraine on the left bank of the Upper Tirich Mir Glacier. While it stormed, we ascended, crossing numerous crevasses and trying to acclimatize by preparing the approach route on the Upper Tirich Glacier. Camps I (5300m) and II (5800m) were established on the glacier. We could not see Dir Gol Zom itself until near Camp II, as it is located at the end of the glacier, which bends like a bow.

After two days' rest at Base Camp, we left to attack the summit, spending one night each at Camp I and Camp II. We established Camp III at 6300 meters, from which we set out the next day, August 4, to the summit. We went up on the Upper Tirich Glacier until near the saddle and then traversed on the ridge toward the summit. A lot of time was spent avoiding hidden crevasses. On the ridge just below the summit, we spent much more time dealing with ice and soft powder snow. At 3 p.m., Minamii, Ikeya and Yokochi reached the top of Dir Gol Zom with three high-altitude porters.

After half an hour, we began to descend. We joined Mr. Kinoshita, who had given up only 100 meters below the summit, and, helped by the twilight, arrived at CIII just before 8 p.m. It was an extremely long day for the seniors.

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