

Next day we started climbing early in the morning and reached an altitude of 6,700m by the afternoon. However, it was still too warm. The snow was heavy and we were now very tired after two nights of climbing. At 6,700m we made our third bivouac. Next morning the weather changed for the worse once again and we decided to go down. It wasn't easy because we had only 25 hooks and 10 ice screws. We had to rappel from one-hook belays. Fortunately, we reached the bottom of the wall without any falls.

Next morning we reached base camp. Our decision to retreat was correct as by now it was beginning to snow heavily. Soon there was over half-a-meter of fresh snow and this was the first time during our expedition that it had snowed in base camp.

In our opinion the south west face of Khunyang Chhish East is as big and hard as, for example, the north face of Jannu in Nepal. It is really one of the Karakoram's great climbing challenges.

GRZEGORZ SKOREK, *Poland*

*Pumari Chhish South (7,350m), attempt on south face.* Two French climbers were among the first to visit the range last year, making a couple of very spirited attempts to climb the south face of the virgin Pumari Chhish South (7,350m). Yannick Graziani and Christian Trommsdorff moved up the Hispar Glacier at the beginning of May and in winter conditions inspected various side glaciers to the north. They eventually opted to established a base camp at 4,500m on the Yutmaru Glacier and from there attempt a unnamed 6,181m peak south west of Kanjut Sar (and a little to the north of the impressive and virgin 6,400m Hispar Sar). During the third week in May the pair reached 5,400m on the elegant west ridge but was prevented from continuing further by windslab.

They then moved camp to the Pumari Glacier and attempted a 600-meter couloir leading up to the unclimbed south ridge of Khunyang Chhish East. Although the weather was fine, after a bivouac at 5,900m the pair realized that to continue in alpine style was impractical with their insufficient level of acclimatization, so they descended.

They now returned to the Yutmaru Glacier and attempted a new route on the flanks of Kanjut Sar (7,760m). The pair climbed a short distance up the south face of 7,330m Yutmaru Sar and then broke out right to a southwest facing spur leading up to an unnamed summit of ca 6,200m near the start of the long west-northwest ridge of Kanjut Sar. Climbing to a bivouac on this spur at around 5,800m they were again defeated by dangerous snow conditions and while retreating set off a huge windslab avalanche.

Still not happy with their depth of acclimatization, they decided nevertheless to make an attempt on the south face of Pumari Chhish, following the line attempted twice previously, in 1999 and 2000, by the New Zealand–British couple, Julie Ann Clyma and Roger Payne. This pair had opted for a leftward slanting, snow-covered ramp line, leading up to the crest of the southwest ridge. On both attempts from the West Yutmaru Glacier, they were driven back by bad weather, the first from 6,200m approximately one third of the way up the ramp and the second from only 5,300m.

Graziani and Trommsdorff climbed for 14 hours on the first day to a bivouac on the arête bordering the ramp at 6,100m. Next day two hours took them to the top of the ramp, where they then had to embark on the crux of the climb, 700 meters of rock and mixed climbing to reach the summit ridge. Three difficult mixed pitches took them to a small snow patch, above

which they needed to aid up an overhanging 25-meter-high dihedral. There followed some fine mixed pitches before they were forced to construct a very bad bivouac at 6,750m. The weather turned, spindrift swamped them all night, and the next day there was no option but to go down.

After a week at base camp the pair set off again on the June 14 and after three days had climbed past their high point via more excellent mixed terrain to reach an altitude of 6,900m, a point they estimated to be just two pitches below the ridge. To that point they had climbed ca 2,300m with 60° snow, 90° ice, mixed climbing at M6, rock to French 6a and a vertical 20-meter pitch of A2, all on excellent granite. Then it began to snow. On the way down, at around 6,500m, they witnessed the huge seracs, which threaten the lower section of the face, explode. The resulting avalanche wiped the approach clean, filling the valley below with an enormous cloud and even affecting base camp some four kilometers distant. The two promptly descended and went home.

LINDSAY GRIFFIN, U.K.

*Peak 6,920m, first ascent.* A four-man Russian team comprising Valeri Bagov, Ivan Dusharin, Viktor Kolesnichenko, and (Russian-American) Lev Yoffe, made the first ascent of the unnamed Pk 6,920m, which lies on or close to the watershed ridge between Pumari Chhish and Yutmaru Sar. The expedition approached up the Hispar Glacier and then turned north for a few hours up the Yutmaru Glacier to establish base camp on the east side. A huge ca 1,500-meter tall icefall blocks access to the Upper Yutmaru at around 6,000m and this had to be gained by a rather dangerous route to a flanking ridge. Placing two camps (5,600m and 6,300m), the team reached a point where it was possible to gain the upper glacier safely, but with a descent of close on 600m. They had hoped to be able to reach the top section of the upper Yazghil Glacier to the north of the divide and from then try either the unclimbed South Summit of Pumari Chhish (7,350m) to their west or Yutmaru Sar (7,330m) to their east. The latter has only been climbed once. In July 1980 a small Japanese party followed a similar route to that tried by the Russians last summer, first reaching the Upper Yutmaru Glacier, then ascending this to the west ridge of Yutmaru Sar, after which they crossed the top section of the Upper Yazghil Glacier and finally finished up the north ridge.

Unfortunately, the Russians decided at this point the amount of time left available to them was not enough to succeed with either project. Instead, they continued up the sharp ridge to a nameless summit of 6,920m (determined by GPS readings) and then withdrew to base camp. An application has been made to the Ministry of Tourism to call this peak United Russia.

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## PANMAH MUZTAGH

*Latok V (6,190m), attempt.* The Japanese climber Moromu Omiya returned for his third attempt on the unclimbed 6,190m summit of Latok V. Omiya, who made the first ascent of Latok IV in 1980, attempted this small peak in both 1999 and 2000 via the south face. Last summer with two other companions he again tried the mountain but on the summit day was forced to give up just 70 meters below the top when it simply became too late to continue safely. The peak lies at the end of the southeast ridge of Latok III.

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