

nical skills. We spent two nights out on this section, sheltering in crevasses. Above this slope lay the rock barrier, with an angle varying from 60-90°.

The main difficulties on the barrier were caused by thin ice or snow over rock, which made the climbing insecure and finding good belays difficult. We did not find any good bivouac sites in this section and had to make three consecutive sitting bivouacs. This section could be climbed faster, but we were not properly acclimatized and also had to haul the leader's rucksack. The barrier finished with steep snow slopes and scattered rock outcrops; here we established our last camp before the summit push. It was also our first comfortable night.

On our summit day, August 17, we had more strenuous deep snow before reaching the cornice, ascending only 100m per hour. The cornice was the last challenge. It was not possible to climb it with normal ice equipment, as the snow couldn't hold the weight of a climber, so we resorted to aid-climbing it using two snow anchors with ice gear. The cornice took two hours to complete, but from its top the summit was just 300m across a large snow plateau, which we crossed in an hour.

Although there may be other possible routes on the north face, we felt ours was the most logical and direct. We were also lucky with the weather. The nights were not very cold, which allowed us to be relatively comfortable during our sitting bivouacs.

ALEXEY GORBATENKOV, *Mountainguides.ru, Russia*

*Yume Muztagh, first ascent.* At 11:05 a.m. on August 1 all four members of our expedition succeeded in making the first ascent of an unnamed 6,345m peak in the Kun Lun Mountains. Although our average age was 61, all participated in every aspect of the climb, including load carrying, reconnaissance, and route selection. We did not employ local porters, horses, donkeys, or camels. Moreover, we received no outside financial and material support; the expedition, including a reconnaissance trip in 2004, was financed solely by its members. The party comprised a group of friends who have climbed together for decades and are well aware of each other's abilities and limitations.

The Xinjiang-Tibet Highway runs southeast from Kashgar along the southwestern edge of the Taklimakan Desert. At Yecheng the road splits, with the Highway running south, then southeast into the Lingzi Thang Plains, while a left branch continues east along the edge of the desert. We drove along the Highway for ca. 530m and made our base camp at one of the truck stops at Dahongliutan. Our proposed virgin peak was located 16km northeast of this point at N 35° 41'; E 79° 41' [These mountains are often referred to as the Aksai Chin—Ed.]. Our peak, the highest among a group of 6,000m mountains, lay at the end of a broad valley that curves towards the southeast. It is not visible from the road.

Because of the rich history and romance associated with the Silk Road, we were interested in the Kun Lun Mountains, rather than the better known Himalaya or Karakoram. A reconnaissance team in 2004 chose the mountain for its easy approach and, out of consideration for our ages, lack of great technical difficulty. So it was that on July 21, 2005, I (66) as leader, Hiromitsu Izutani (61), Toshikazu Kurimoto (56), and Eizo Maeda (61) arrived at Dahongliutan (4,265m). Although basic and without toilet facilities, the truck stop provided us with spacious and luxurious living quarters (compared to a tent), hot water, and a warm environment for recovery.

Conditions were such that we were able to drive eight kilometers across the desert and

establish our advance base camp at 5,440m. The next day we placed Camp 1 on the shoulder of a scree-covered ridge at 5,800m. Above, a mixture of snow and rock led over a small top at 6,100m to a col on the far side at 6,010m, where we placed our second camp. We left here on August 1 and followed the snow-covered ridge crest, with a large cornice to one side, until a steep snow slope led to a junction with the north ridge. A gentle plateau extended toward the summit, which was a broad snow dome. We reached this easily and returned to Camp 1 the same day. We christened our mountain Yume Muztagh, a name that was later approved by the Kashgar Mountaineering Association. *Yume* means “dreams” in Japanese, while *Muztagh* is a snow- or ice-covered mountain in the local language of Uighur. All four of us are alumni of Kyoto University Alpine Club (KUAC) and members of the Academic Alpine Club of Kyoto University (AACK).

TOSHIO ITOH, *Japan*



Looking northwest into a high cirque close to the head of the Western Yurung Glacier, Kun Lun. The Russian expedition that attempted Pt 6,903m (a.k.a. Chongce Peak) thought all the visible peaks, which rise a relatively short distance above the glacier, were unclimbed. However, it appears that Pt 6,903m was climbed by two Japanese in August 1988, approaching up the East Chongce Glacier. *Otto Chkhetiani*

*Unsupported crossing of the Western Kun Lun and attempt on Pt. 6,903m.* In September a Russian team jointly led by Boris Malakhov and me, with Michael Bertov, Paul Demeshchik, and Sergey Zajko, made a northeast-to-southwest crossing of the Western Kun Lun. In this report we use the names that appear on old Russian maps from the end of 19th century. We have been on expeditions to Xinjiang since 1998, and our experience is that these names are much closer to local nomenclature than names on other maps. When it comes to glaciers, we have used names given by Chinese glaciologists.

We first traveled along the southern Taklamakan road to Keria (Yutian on Chinese maps) and then went south 75km to the village of Polu, which has been known to the outside world since the visits of Grabczewski and Przhewalsky. We hired donkeys and on September 9 left for a two-day journey to reach the Kar Yagde tributary. For the next month we did not meet a single person. The continuation through the Kurab-Darja Gorge involves approximately 50 river crossings and is described by Mark Newcomb in his article “Ultima Thule” (AAJ 1997 p. 129).

This was our second expedition to this remote area. In autumn 2003 Andrey Lebedev, Malakhov, Alexander Zazhigin, and I left Goubauluk and travelled southwest over the Kudzhik-Bulak Pass, then on down alongside the Zejlik-Darja River to Yurung Kash. At this point we could neither travel along its banks nor ford the river. We retreated north, crossing a 5,880m