

repitched the tent on the tiny site. A sleepless, stressful bivouac followed. It continued to snow hard all night, and we had to dig ourselves out once per hour. It was the worst bivouac I've had since that night on the summit of North Twin a few years ago with Marko Prezelj.

At 5 a.m. it cleared, so we quickly crammed our sodden gear into our packs and started to rappel. It was a good thing, too, because by the time we were stepping off the face eight hours and many, many rappels later, it was starting to snow again.

STEVE HOUSE, AAC

Editor's note: In 2003 an experienced three-man Polish team comprising Janusz Golab, Stanislaw Piecuch, and Grzegorz Skorek climbed unroped up the 2,500m southwest face for ca 1,000m, then pitched more sustained ground, Skorek leading a very thin ice/mixed pitch at M7, with little or no protection, to 6,700m. Temperatures were high, snow conditions were bad, and after their third bivouac the weather began to look ominous. They retreated.

Prior to their visit the mountain had been attempted by a 10-man Korean team. Their original aim may have been the south ridge, but they were unable to make inroads, and it appears they turned to the long south ridge of Khunyang Chhish Main, presumably hoping to traverse over or around Khunyang Chhish South to the east summit. They climbed as far as the Ice Cake before retreating.

SHUIJERAB GROUP

Wulio-I-Sar (6,050m), first ascent. Mathieu Paley, a French professional photographer based in Hong Kong, has spent a considerable amount of time in the Karakoram over the last three to four years working for NGOs. He and I are passionate about British exploration in the northern areas of the Karakoram (the travels of Younghusband, Conway, Shipton, et al). We are also interested in the history of Shimshal's remote population. The aim of our two-man trip was to explore the Braldu Valley near the Chinese border and make the first ascent of an easy peak named Wulio-I-Sar (a.k.a. Chikar Sar, 6,050m).

This involved a walk of five days from Shimshal village to our base camp. We reached the spot known as Wulio, which lies below the south face of Wulio-I-Sar, and walked up a narrow valley to the start of the glacier at 5,000m. Here we spent the night under a large boulder on the moraine. The next morning, August 8, we began at 4:30 a.m. We avoided seracs by slanting right up the south face to a small col and then up through an easy crevassed area to reach the east ridge. We gained its crest at ca 5,800m and followed it easily to the summit. This was Paley's first-ever mountain. It took six-and-a-half hours from the moraine and was Alpine F. We had no altimeter and have taken the height from Nelles Map Sheet 2.

For over two weeks we explored the lower reaches of the Braldu Valley and an old salt mine located at place known as Darband, near the Chinese border. The former mining activity may have justified the existence of an old route across the Lukpe La (5,620m), connecting the Braldu to Askole in Baltistan. This Lukpe La (maybe first identified by Younghusband, then Schomberg in 1934) is the fifth pass that was originally identified by early British explorers (after the Turkestan Pass, Salto Pass, and West and East Muztagh passes). In a cave we discovered a burial site and skeleton, which leads us to believe that this deserted area was formerly inhabited by travelers and salt workers.

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