

camp but eventually succumbed to our hunger. I thank the Mugs Stump Award and other sponsors for their support on our first Himalayan experience.

MAXIME TURGEON, *Canada*

*Latok I, north ridge, attempt; Tony Tower, Releasing Bad Energy.* Damian and Willie Benegas were again on the Choktoi for an attempt on the north ridge of Latok I. They arrived in base camp on July 22 and found conditions on the face to be the best they had seen, with mostly dry rock and clean granite cracks where on their previous two attempts, they had climbed under huge snow towers and avalanche gullies. In contrast the weather was probably the worst they had encountered in the area. Their first attempt, in early August, reached 5,200m. Here a storm pinned them in the tent for four days before they were able to escape.

Their second attempt began on August 13. On the initial rock buttress, they climbed a few new variations up to 5.10a, but while leading the fourth pitch Willie pulled off a huge block, which chopped the rope and went straight toward his brother, belaying below. It broke in two just above Damian's head, and only a watermelon-size fragment dealt him a glancing blow, ripping his jacket. The brothers continued and that day climbed almost 1,000m from base camp. The next day they continued for seven pitches to the second shoulder, finding the climbing enjoyable and safe, a big change from 2005, when they were climbing under huge threatening snow mushrooms. The altitude was around 5,500m.

The next morning it was snowing hard, and by the 16th the easy 4th- and 5th-class rock above looked like a 55° powder ski run. On the 17th they made a difficult and dangerous rappel descent, keeping near the crest of the rock buttress in the lower section to minimize the danger of flanking avalanches. On a couple of rappels, ropes irretrievably jammed and had to be cut. They reached base at 10 p.m.

On August 19, four days before leaving for Skardu, the pair climbed a short new rock route on Tony Tower, which they called Releasing Bad Energy (six pitches, 5.10a). They have proposed to the Alpine Club of Pakistan that in 2007 they initiate a Karakoram Climbing School to teach Pakistan climbers to become high-altitude guides and to bring them closer to the standards of safety and professionalism characteristic of Nepalese Sherpas.

FROM EXPEDITION DISPATCHES ON THE NORTH FACE WEBSITE

*Latok V, first ascent; Latok II, south ridge, first alpine-style ascent.* Doug Chabot, Mark Richey, and I arrived at base camp on the Baintha Lukpar Glacier on July 28, with the intent of climbing the west face of Latok III. We arrived at the end of an extended period of hot weather, which had melted much of the ice from the face, causing considerable rockfall. During acclimatization we made what we believe is the first ascent of Latok V (6,190m). [See note below on Latok nomenclature.] On August 4 we ascended the glacier to the col between Latok V and Latok IV and then up the east face to the south ridge. We continued along the crest of the ridge to a bivouac at 6,000m. On August 5 we reached the summit and descended to our bivouac, then back to base camp the following day.

Observations of rockfall on the west face of Latok III made during acclimatization trips up the glacier caused us to change our objective to the south ridge of Latok II (7,103m). At the time we did not know this route had been followed by a 17-person Italian expedition, to make

the first ascent of the peak in 1977. We made a reconnaissance of the route on August 14 and discovered fixed rope and trash left from 1977. On August 19 we started up the south ridge and climbed to above a large gap in the ridge that would force us out onto a glacier to the left. A serac barrier threatens this glacier, and by midday it was too hot to venture in that direction, so we stopped at 5,500m to wait for cooler early-morning temperatures. On August 20 we crossed the glacier and climbed an ice face on the opposite side. This led to a point above the seracs where we could recross the glacier to the south ridge. We then climbed an ice face and chimneys to our second bivouac, at 6,400m.

On our third day we climbed through several rock bands to a snow ridge, where we placed a high camp at 6,700m. On August 21 the weather started to deteriorate, and we reached the summit in a storm. We took two more days to descend to base camp.

After Latok II we waited to do more climbing, but poor weather and lots of new snow prevented us from doing anything else.

STEVE SWENSON, AAC

*Editors note: This was the second ascent of the Italian route (summit reached on August 28, 1977 by Ezio Alimonta, Toni Masé, and Renato Valentini, after the expedition had fixed 2,600m of rope) and the fourth of the summit.*

*Latok Group, clarification.* During the summer Mark Richey, Steve Swenson, and I spent six weeks on the Baintha Lukpar Glacier, a branch of the Biafo Glacier, climbing Latoks II and V. Having copies of *AAJ* 1998 and 2000 with us, it became apparent there were significant errors and inconsistencies in the photos, maps, and accounts of the locations of Latoks IV and V. The accompanying photo shows the five Latoks correctly labeled. This will hopefully put to rest the confusion.

For correction sake, in *AAJ* 1998, p. 321, a sketch is incorrectly labeled. The peak captioned Latok IV is actually Latok V, the smallest of the group. Latok IV is not represented in the drawing but would be to the right of Latok V.

In *AAJ* 2000, pp. 333-334 there are also misrepresentations in regards to Alexander Huber's account of Latok IV and Omiya and Tsuchida's attempt on Latok V. Omiya and Tsuchida did, in fact, attempt Latok V, the height of which they reported as 6,190m. This height corresponds closely to our altimeter reading on the first ascent. We also found a picket with Japanese markings, further buttressing their claims. Their account in the *AAJ* is correct, and the editor's note was wrong. Furthermore, Alex and Thomas Huber climbed the lower of two obvious summits on Latok IV (6,456m). The photo by Omiya on p. 333 incorrectly labels Latok V as Latok IV, thus the Huber's line is not in the photograph.

So the sketch in *AAJ* 1998 is wrong, the photo in *AAJ* 2000 is incorrectly labeled, and the editor's note about Omiya and Tsuchida's attempt is mistaken.

DOUG CHABOT, AAC

*Latok III, third ascent.* No doubt influenced by the inclusion of the route in the seminal book, *Himalayan Alpine Style*, Alvaro Novellon and Oscar Perez of Spain made the third ascent of the southwest ridge of 6,949m Latok III, also the third ascent of the mountain. The first ascent was