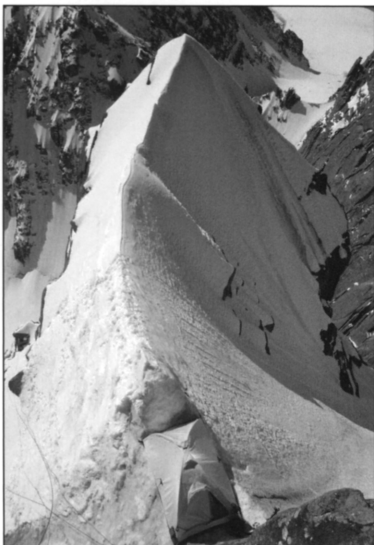


Kizil Asker's great southeast face, showing the line of its new route by Mikhail Mikhailov, Alexander Odintsov, and Alexander Ruchkin. Several attempts have been made on the spectacular ice couloir on the left [p. 349, *AAJ* 2003]. *Alexander Ruchkin*



Camp on the Kizil Asker "knife," where the team had expected to find good ledges. *Alexander Ruchkin*

*Malitskovo Glacier; Pik 5,055m, Pik 4,975m, first ascents; Pik 4,995m, attempt.* After a two-day drive from Bishkek into the Kokshaal region, Dave Swinburne and I were dropped off on July 20, having arranged to be collected at the same point on August 8. During this time we made two ascents of new peaks at the head of the Malitskovo Glacier. The peaks are marked 5,055m and 4,975m on the American Alpine Club's Kyrgyzstan map, but our GPS recorded 5,061m and 5,100m, respectively. Both peaks provided simple ascents of PD in grade. We found more interesting AD climbing during an attempt upon Pik 4,995m. The final summit ridge held unstable slush-like snow, and we found it unsafe to continue. We then spent several days on the adjacent Nalivkin Glacier. Several inches of fresh snow and daily squalls prevented further attempts.

Night temperatures rarely fell below freezing. With lots of sun, this made for poor snow conditions. We advise that a later period would be better for climbing in this area. This is supported by other trip reports, but we were governed by our work holidays.

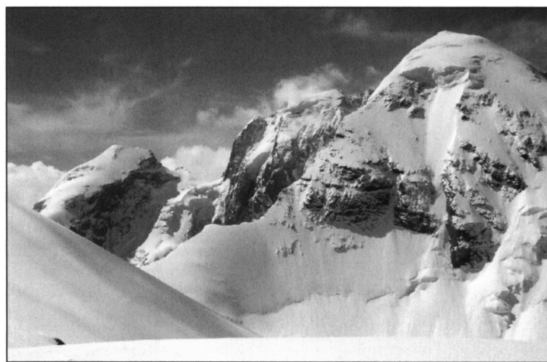
STEWART HOWARD, U.K.

*Nalivkin Glacier, Malitskovo Glacier; Pik 4,828m (Sigma Peak), first ascent; Piks 5,055m (Hidden Peak), 4,975m (Snow Dome), new routes; other ascents.* We chose the western Kokshaal Too region for its potential for first ascents. Also called "The Forbidden Range," this was a closed military region until the late 1990s, when the first western expeditions arrived. It is still under military control, and permission to access the area has to be obtained from the military. Consequently, very few expeditions have visited this place, and many peaks remain unclimbed. We were given a map by ITMC, indicating climbed and unclimbed peaks in the area we intended to visit.

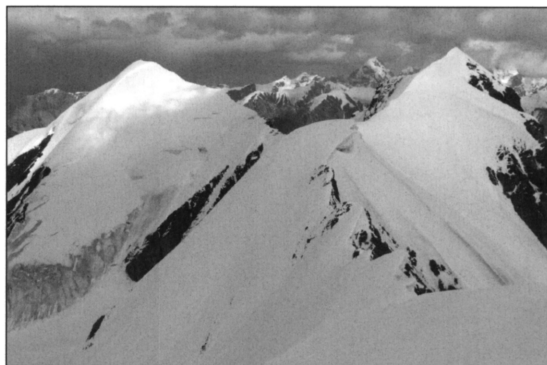
We drove with two vehicles, a 6-wheel drive bus and a smaller truck, from Bishkek via Naryn to the western Kokshaal Too Range. The trucks brought us to the slopes north of the Aytali River, opposite the Nalivkin Glacier, where we set up base camp next to a 3,860m lake.



The Fersmana and Malitskovo glaciers from the northern slopes of the Aytali Valley, more or less where the South African team parked their trucks. *Donovan van Graan*



Looking from Pik 4,968m to Pik 5,611m, with Byeliy, a.k.a. Grand Poobah behind.. *Ulrike Kiefer*



The view from Pik 5,055m (Hidden Peak) to Pik 4,975m (Snow Dome). *Ulrike Kiefer*

Patrick Black, Robert Cromarty, Linda Daffue, Willem Daffue, Greg Devine, Carl Fatti, Donovan van Graan, Dean van der Merwe, and I split into three groups, each exploring a different valley and assessing climbing possibilities there.

Patrick, Dean, Robert, and I went up the Nalivkin Glacier to look at Pik 5,055m, an apparently unclimbed peak high in the valley. We identified two possible routes, one over the west ridge and summit of 4,968m and the other via easy snow slopes leading from the west to the col between 4,968m and 5,055m. On August 14 Patrick and I climbed over the summit of 4,968m to the summit of 5,055m (Hidden Peak). Dean and Robert chose the other route.

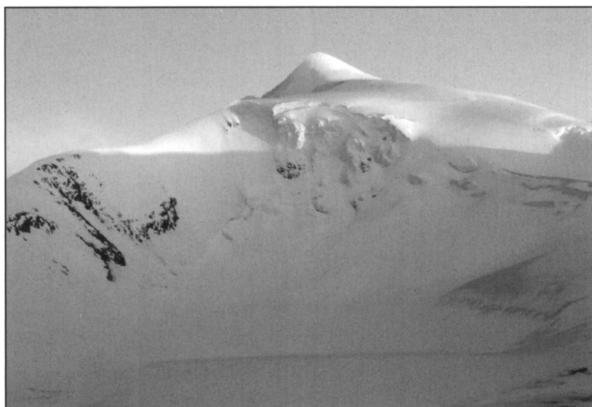
Willem, Linda, and Donovan went into the Malitskovo Glacier basin. They came back confident that both 4,828m and 4,975m could be climbed and possibly 4,996m as well—all unclimbed peaks. On August 14 Willem, Linda, Donovan, and Carl climbed 4,828m (Sigma Peak). The point marked 4,975m turned out to be just a mark on the map. The summit lies south of this mark. On August 26 the same group summited this peak (Snow Dome) and measured its height as 5,105m by GPS. After a second reconnaissance to 4,996m we discarded our plans to climb it. There was not enough snow coverage to allow reasonable access, and the ascent seemed to involve some hectic rock climbing.

The third group, consisting of Carl and Greg, reported that the Fersmana and Sarychat glaciers had retreated far to the south, and the lower valleys were framed by sheer rock cliffs with no reasonable access to the summits.

Toward the end of the expedition Patrick and I walked far eastward, past the confluence of the Aytali and Sarychat rivers, in hope of being able to climb what we called "The Coloss," a

massive cluster of peaks 4,671m, 4,879m, and 4,849m high, but we didn't have time. However, an ascent by the northeast ridge seems quite possible.

The following peaks were also climbed by the team: 5,156m, Obzhorniy, by Ulrike and Patrick via the northeast ridge; 5,156m, Obzhorniy, by Dean, Robert, Willem, Linda, Carl, and Donovan via the glacier and snow slopes to the north; 4,850m, Metel, by Greg, Dean, Robert, Willem, Linda, Carl, and Donovan; 4,656m, Peak Macciato, by Dean; and 4,578m, by Dean.



Pik 5,156m (Obzhorniy) at sunrise. Ulrike Kiefer

River crossings were major obstacles, especially in the afternoon. It was not easy to find a safe passage at times, and we had to help each other across. The weather, though, was kind; bad weather spells only lasted for only short times. The snow was firm and enjoyable early in the day and turned soft only after 11 a.m. We encountered deep, soft snow only on Snow Dome.

The mountain slopes are littered with ibex and Marco Polo sheep horns. We were privileged to watch ibex a number of times. We also saw eagles, lammergeyers, hundreds of marmots, and tracks of what we believe to be a wolf.

Happy with our achievements, we returned to Bishkek on the 25th. We left records of our ascents with ITMC, whose president is also president of the Kyrgyz alpine club. Later we learned of the British party [Stewart Howard and Dave Swinburne, above] who had been to the area just before us. They reported having climbed 4,975m (5,105m) and 5,055m, both from the Malitskovo Glacier. Thus, two of our "first ascents" turned out not to be such. Still, our two routes up 5,055m are new routes, approaching the mountain from a different valley. This discovery came as quite a shock. [Howard and Swinburne had returned just days before Kiefer's group left, and they had not yet sent their report to ITMC when Kiefer returned—Ed.] May this serve as a warning to others who are planning to scale an unclimbed mountain: Not even the best local information is necessarily correct. May this also serve as a reminder to pass on climbing achievements to local authorities, so they can keep the record straight.

ULRIKE KIEFER, *South Africa*

*Central Kokshaal-Too, history prior to 2007.* With the eastern (Dankova) and western (Kizil Asker) sectors of the Western Kokshaal-too having now been explored by a number of non-CIS climbing parties (beginning with a French-German team to the Dankova region in 1996 and an Anglo-American-German party to the Kizil Asker area in 1997), several recent teams have been investigating the little known central section. Exploration of this compact area of dramatic peaks along the Kyrgyzstan-China border has been dominated by Pat Littlejohn and his International School of Mountaineering (ISM) expeditions. In 2001 a splinter group from one of Littlejohn's expeditions traveled east to the valley leading up to the Malitskovo Glacier and