

Editor's note: Beka Brakai Chhok has three summits, and Hervé Barmasse and Simone Moro climbed the southernmost peak, usually listed as the highest, at 6,940m. However, other sources place the south summit at 6,850m, with the middle summit slightly higher at 6,882m and the north peak at 6,845m. Still others put the middle summit at 6,830m, which would leave the southern peak as the highest, even at 6,850m. In photos of the group, it appears the peaks are closer in elevation than the 6,940m figure for the southern summit would indicate, but the photos do not show conclusively which peak is highest. What can be said indisputably is that only Barmasse and Moro have stood atop any of the Beka Brakai Chhok summits, and, Moro said, "It was possible to see from the summit that our summit was the highest of the three."

Beka Brakai Chhok, attempt. On July 2 my climbing partner Malcolm Bass (U.K.) and I turned back at 6,400m on our attempt to make the first ascent of Beka Brakai Chhok (6,940m). For me it was the second retreat—I'd failed on the peak the previous year with Lydia Bradey.

On June 25 Malcolm and I established Camp 4 at ca 6,000m, several steep pitches below the southwest ridge, and prepared for a summit day that would see us up the final 900m and back to camp in what we hoped would be no more than 24 hours. But during the night the barometric pressure dropped sharply, and it started to snow. Never mind, we could do with a rest day, we surmised, not realizing that intermittent snowstorms would continue for seven days.

After an aborted try for the summit during a brief clear spell on the second day of storms, we made a pact to stretch our food for as long as possible. Thus began a pattern of watching the barometer for any rise in pressure, packing each night for an early start, and fruitlessly setting the alarm to wake us periodically to check the weather. It was a nerve-wracking time; we could see our opportunity slipping away as our resources dwindled.

But on the afternoon of July 1 the weather suddenly cleared. By now we were eating little, trying to hold food back for our summit bid, but now we threw caution to the wind, ate the last of the porridge, and headed off. We climbed through deep, fresh snow to the southwest ridge, then began traversing the ridge as the sun rose. The climbing got harder the farther we traversed toward the summit, and the snow became increasingly unconsolidated, to the point where we could no longer build anchors. After half an hour on one lead, Malcolm yelled that he was coming back. "This will go on for several hours, and I don't think we can justify the danger," he said. I agreed. I was desperately disappointed but wanted to live to climb another day.

PAT DEAVOLL, *New Zealand*

RAKAPOSHI RANGE

Rakaposhi, southwest spur, attempt; Neyzah Peak, first ascent. In July our team of ten Catalans and one Basque traveled to Pakistan planning to climb Rakaposhi (7,788m). Conditions on the southwest spur, first climbed in 1958 by a British-Pakistani expedition, were not as we'd hoped. On the ice and mixed slopes leading to the spur, we were surprised by several rockfalls. After having equipped the mountain with 1,300m of fixed rope, we decided, at 6,000m, that it was too dangerous to continue.

For several days we had been admiring sunsets on a beautiful rocky pyramid that dominated the southeast side of the Kunti Glacier. Like the majority of the summits of the Kunti cirque, this prominent pyramid was unclimbed. An obvious spur ran up the mountain from the glacier to the summit, with a continuous northwest exposure. It inspired us to dream.

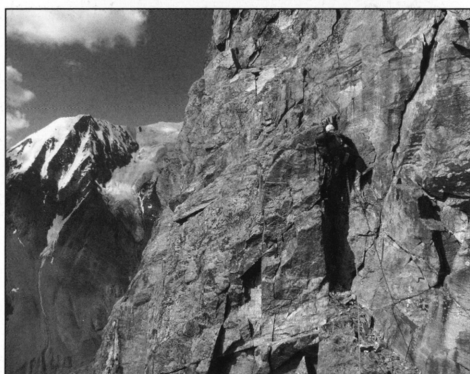
On August 1 Pep Permañé and I explored the viability of a line on the northwest spur.



The line of Guilleries on the northwest face of Neyzah Peak (ca 5,788m). The peaks to the right are unnamed and unclimbed. *Josep Solà*

After four ropelengths on fairly solid rock, including some beautiful dihedrals (V+), we descended to base camp, having left three dynamic ropes fixed in the crux passages.

The next day before sunrise, Carles Figueres, Permañé, and I regained the high point and continued through 300m of easy rock (III-IV), several ropelengths through systems of ledges and dihedrals (V- and 6a), and 150m of easy climbing leading to the only possible bivouac spot. In the last rays of sunlight, Permañé and I fixed the next two ropelengths (V+) before descending to settle in “comfortably” for the night.



Pep Permañé leading steep rock during the first ascent of Neyzah Peak. *Josep Solà*

On August 3 Permañé and I continued the ascent, while Figures rested at the bivy ledge. After leaving the crest of the northwest spur, we entered a large amphitheater where six ropelengths of rock and mixed climbing (V to 6a) gained the snow arête leading to the summit. We spent the rest of the day descending to base camp, with some 20 rappels. At midnight we three rejoined the rest of the team to celebrate the opening of this new route. We propose the name Neyzah Peak (ca 5,788m; neyzah meaning “arrow” in Urdu), and the route is Guilleries (1,300m, ED- 6a, mixed).

JOSEP SOLÀ, *Spain, (translated by Jeffrey Lea)*