

day once I reached level ground. My body was rapidly weakening.

The snow that had fallen during my 24 days of vertical living now lay unconsolidated on the East Khani Basa Glacier. Assessing my rapidly deteriorating health, the continuously falling snow, and the 13km trip to base camp, I decided to cache my two haul bags of climbing gear. Deep down I knew I couldn't return—at least not that year. Who knows, maybe the porters will make a winter siege of my equipment, and if they do I will be happy. In the northern villages, where opportunities for work are slim, the earnings from selling my equipment would help with their difficult lives.

I packed my necessities and, with intense hunger, began post-holing toward wellness. It took two painfully long days to make it back to base camp; they were my fourth and fifth days without food. Many times I collapsed, taking several minutes to stagger back to my feet. Anytime I stopped, painful diarrhea would start, red blood entwined with white gooey stuff that I presumed was muscle. My body was shutting down, eating itself. But it's amazing how the universe balances itself out; my physical strength had left me, but my mind had never been clearer. I was never worried or frightened, for there was no sense in it. Motivated by friends and family, focused on food, and deeply conscious of necessities, I just kept trudging.

Two weeks later, at the Salt Lake City airport, tears streamed down my mother's face. She had been fighting her own battle, dealing with the stress that comes from having a child at a physical breaking point, alone in Pakistan. It was then that I realized I had had it easy.

KYLE DEMPSTER, *Salt Lake City, UT*

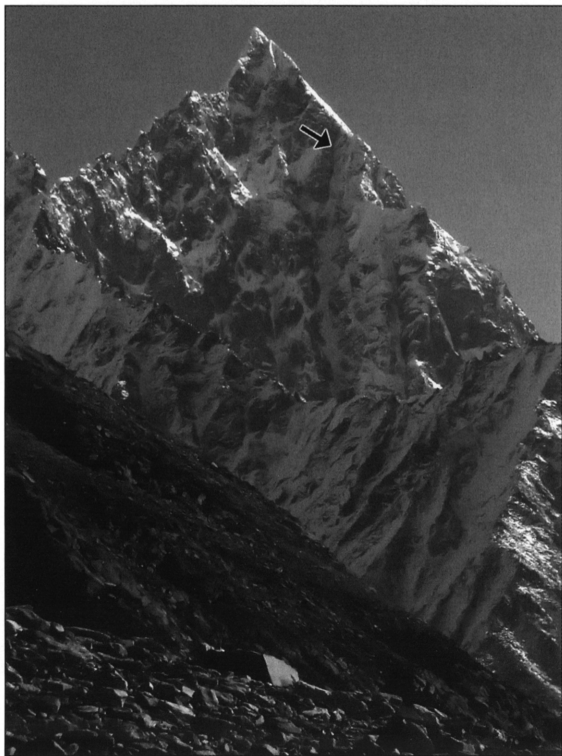
*Hispar Sar, attempt; Emily Peak (Point 5,684m), first ascent.* In mid-September I traveled alone to Hunza in northeast Pakistan to attempt the first ascent of Hispar Sar (6,400m), north of the Hispar Glacier. The plan had raised eyebrows among my family and friends, especially among those who climbed, since the commitment involved in attempting a solo ascent of a virgin peak in a remote region of a politically volatile country is certainly immense. I would explain that climbing alone in such an environment placed unique parameters on my risk assessment: It was not more likely



Rufus Duit's line on the southwest face of Emily Peak (5,684m), on the west side of the Yutmaru Glacier. *Rufus Duit's*

that I would suffer disaster, since my level of acceptable risk would be reduced; rather, I was just less likely to reach my summit. Why then did I want to go alone? Many reasons, not least because I wanted to experience the extraordinary responsibility that such commitment involved.

Hispar Sar presented itself as an accommodating objective for such a project, since, although virgin, it had been well-explored, and it sported a couloir line well-suited to my style of climbing.



The upper southwest face of Hispar Sar (6,400m), with Rufus Duits' high point marked. *Rufus Duits*

During the night of October 2 I left a bivouac beneath the mountain's southwest face. Above, an attractive couloir, climbed to within 300m of the summit by Andy Parkin and Simon Yates in 2004, wound up the face. It was cold, and the ice was in good condition. Climbing with a very light pack, my rope trailing beneath me, I passed by daybreak the spot where Yates and Parkin had traversed out of the couloir to the right. I carried on to the couloir's top, where, at 11:15 a.m., 50m or so beneath the south ridge and easy snow slopes leading to the summit, I reached unavoidable slabs covered in unconsolidated snow. I agonized over my decision, but, having reached the limit of commitment acceptable to me, I had to go down. My high point was perhaps 100m beneath the Parkin-Yates high point, and it had taken me 10 hours 15 minutes to climb the 900m couloir, at a grade of ED AI 4/5.

RUFUS DUITTS, U.K.

*Disteghil Sar, attempt.* In June, Don Bowie, Peter Thompson, Ben Cheek, and I attempted the north ridge of Disteghil Sar (7,885m). Because of the badly convoluted nature of the Malangutti Glacier, this aspect of the world's 20th-highest mountain has only been reached once in three attempts, and that expedition ended in tragedy when three New Zealand climbers were lost. I had visited the neighboring Yazghil Glacier in 1999 and from the summit of a 6,247m peak had discovered an alternative route to the base of this side of Disteghil Sar. The 2008 plan involved crossing Peak 6,247m, then 8km of the upper glacier basin to the foot of the north ridge at 6,000m, and making an alpine-style bid on this steep, partly mixed objective.

The expedition arrived in Shimshal on June 8 and placed base camp beside the Yazghil Glacier on June 10. It was immediately clear that the lower Yazghil was significantly more