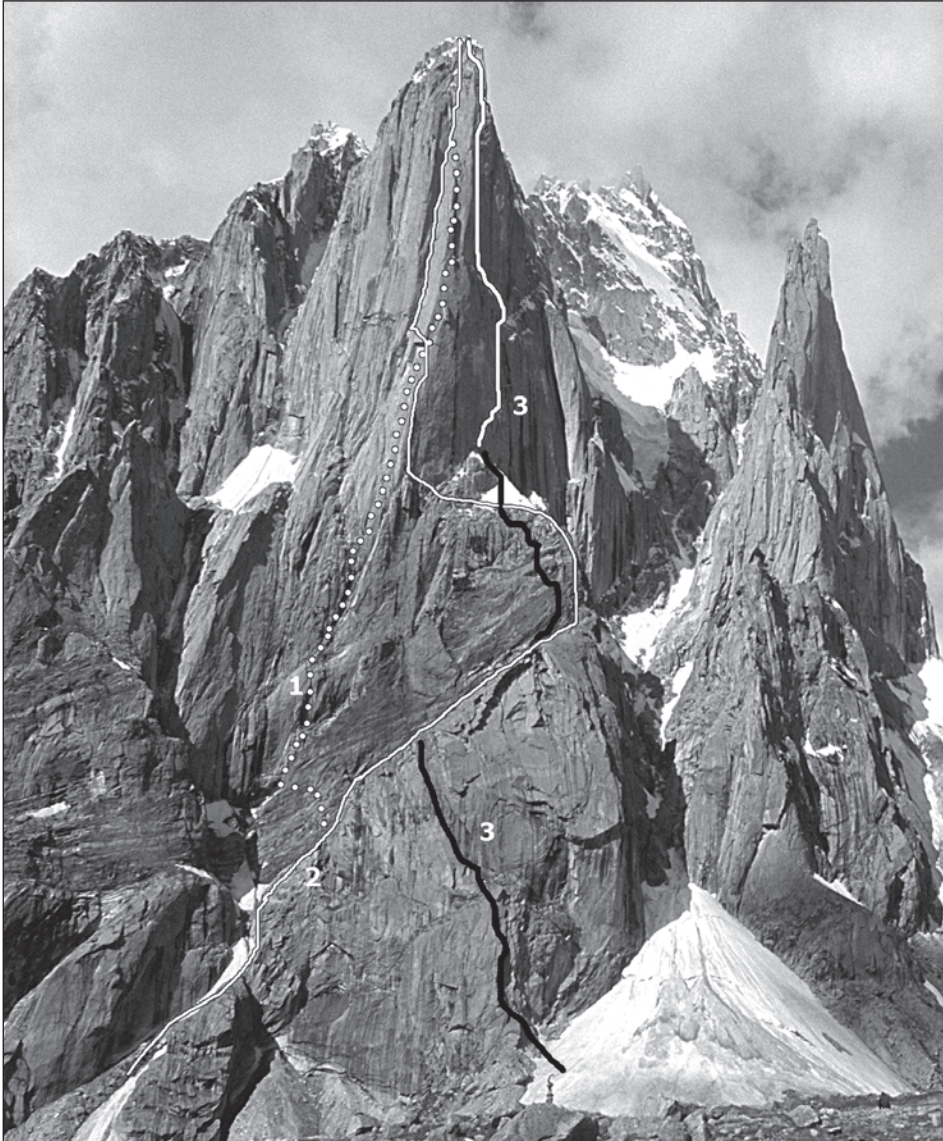


View from low in the Trango approach gully: Trango Tower (T; often erroneously called Nameless Tower), Little Trango (LT), and the Southwest Summit of Great Trango (GT). The line shows Čmárik and Kopold's harrowing descent of the northwest face, with (a) marking the gully that avalanched and swept Kopold 150m. The NW face is home to the 1999 American, Russian, and German routes, while the 2003 Ukrainian attempt climbs the prominent detached pillar just left of the NW face, continuing high up the left skyline of GT's summit tower. The Azeem Ridge (2004) roughly follows the right-hand skyline, and the Čmárik- Kopold route (Assalam Alaikum) ascends farther right, out-of-view. *Vlado Linek*

Great Trango, southwest face to south face (Assalam Alaikum), not to summit; Hainabrakk East Tower, south southeast face (Mystical Denmo); Shipton Spire, east face to northeast ridge, to within 80m of summit (Prisoners of the Shipton); and Ship of Fools, attempt. A joint Czech-Slovak expedition visited the Baltoro from July 26 to August 31. The team comprised eight climbers from Slovakia: Gabo Čmárik, Andrej Kolárik, Igor Koller, Jozef Kopold, Pavol Pekarčík, Juraj Poděbrský, Erik Rabatin, and I. There were four climbers from the Czech Republic: Milan Benian, Martin Klonfar, Petr Piechowicz, and Miroslav Turek. Čmárik, Kopold, Koller, and I had climbed in this region during 2004 and had unfinished projects. In particular Čmárik and Kopold wanted to climb a new line in alpine-style on the south side of Great Trango (6,286m), right of the 2004 American route, Azeem Ridge.

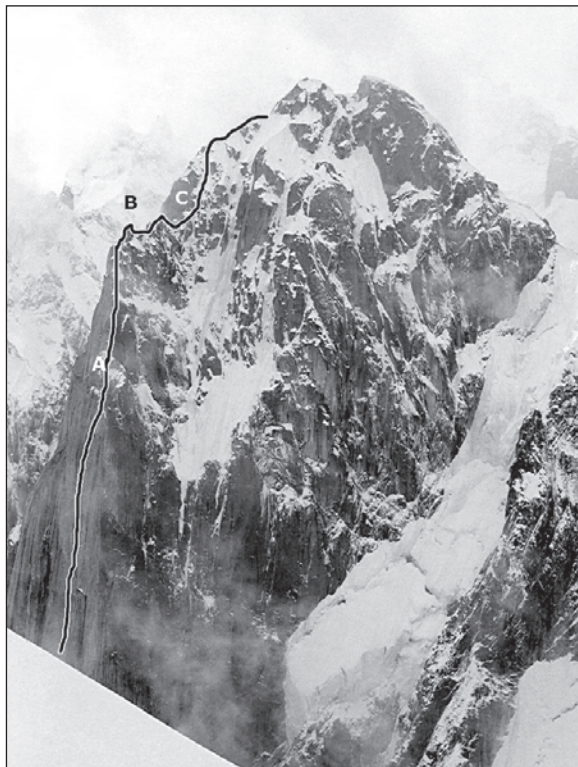
The two started on August 4 in good weather, taking only two small rucksacks and food for four days, no sleeping bags, no mats, no ropes for fixing, and no radios. They planned to move together up the first 1,000m but found the terrain more difficult than expected and were forced to belay. Their progress was slow and not helped by rain and snow throughout the second day. On the fourth day they reached the headwall. That night was very cold, with the temperature down to -15°C , a strong wind, and heavy snowfall. The pair endured a difficult bivouac without sleeping bags. After that, icy or snow-covered rock slowed them down even more. On fifth day they ate their last food and didn't reach the summit ridge until day seven [this was the summit ridge of the ca. 6,250m Southwest summit and not the main summit—



Hainabrakk East Tower (ca. 5,650m) from the east. The face is a little over 1,000m in height. To the right is the Cat's Ears Spire (ca. 5,550m). (1) *Mystical Denmo* on the south-southeast face (34 pitches, VII+ A2; Kolárik-Rabatín, 2005). (2) *Tague it to the Top* (VI 5.11 C2, Copp-Pennings, 2000). (3) *For Better or for Worse* (VII 5.12a WI3; Baer-Brock-McCray-Schneider, 2000). *Vlado Linek*

Ed.]. The overall length of their climb was more than 3,000m and involved many pendulums, wet slabs with poor protection, and loose chimneys.

Čmárik and Kopold intended to traverse the Southwest summit and descend via the normal route [it is not necessary to cross to the main summit in order to gain the normal route—see *AAJ 2005* pp. 14-23 on the ascent of the Azeem Ridge—Ed.] but, due to large



An unusual view of Shipton Spire (5,885m), showing the northeast face. Marked is the new Slovak line, Prisoners of the Shipton, which has 21 pitches (VIII A3) up the right side of the southeast face, until it joins Ship of Fools (Ogden-Synnot, 1997) at the notch (A) on the northeast ridge. Above, the Slovaks climbed 14 pitches up the ridge (VIII- WI 5+), following the original line of Ship of Fools over two pinnacles (B) and past a second col (C) to the final ridge, where they retreated 80m below the summit. A photodiagram of all the routes on the southeast face appears in *AAJ 2005*, p. 347. *Vlado Linek collection*

the first half of the route big-wall style. They completed the second half in alpine-style, reaching the summit on the 23rd. Mystical Denmo gives 1,400m of climbing, with 34 pitches up to VII+ and A2, mainly following cracks. [This new route starts up the 2000 Copp-Pennings line, Tague it to the Top, then moves left to climb directly to the central pillar on the south-southeast face. In the upper half it climbs very close to the Copp-Pennings line, cutting through its leftward horizontal traverse—Ed.]

Koller, Poděbradský, cameraman Pekarčík, and I worked on Shipton Spire (5,885m). In 2004 Koller and I, with the help of Čmárik until he became ill, climbed 17 pitches of a new line up the right edge of the southeast face. Bad weather stopped us just 100 meters below the notch on the northeast ridge where Ship of Fools comes in from the left (*AAJ 2005*, p. 347, photo). Last year we returned to complete it.

We four started up the route on August 1. Through generally unsettled weather we climbed and fixed 10 pitches to a roof shaped like the letter W and dubbed Cassiopeia. In

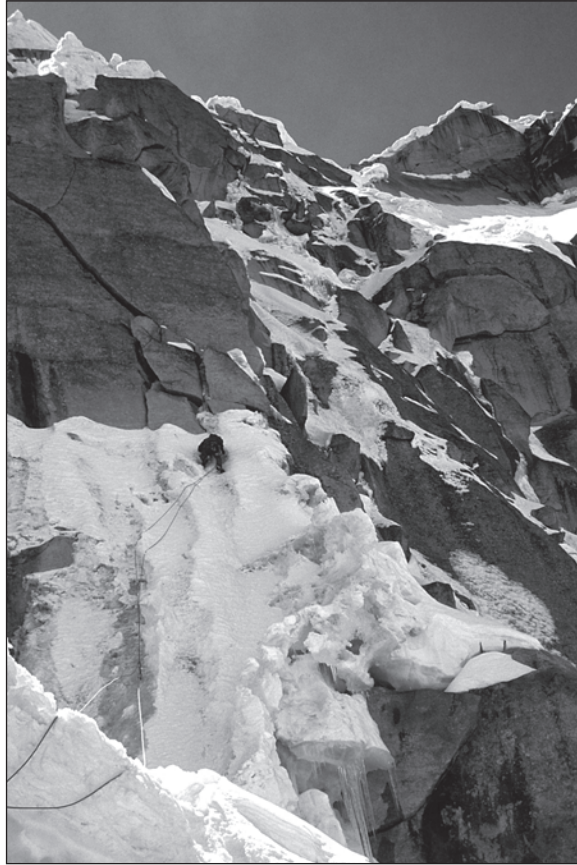
amounts of snow on the ridge, decided instead to rappel the huge northwest face. They descended through the afternoon and all the next night. At one point Kopold was avalanched 150m. At another point Čmárik fell 30m down icy slabs. At 5:00 a.m. on the 11th, after 16 hours rappelling, they reached Trango Base Camp.

Their route, named Assalam Alaikum, had ca. 90 pitches, with difficulties up to VIII and A2. They left three pitons and two bolts (for pendulums). On the descent they had only their rack, five pitons, and eight remaining bolts for making ca. 60 rappels. They rappelled the face from right to left, crossing the Russian and American routes (and using their rappel anchors), to reach the gully on the left of the face.

Andrej Kolárik and Erik Rabatin climbed on Hainabrakk East (ca. 5,650m), with the goal of completing a logical direct line up the central pillar in the middle of the face. They started on August 6 but due to bad weather had to return to base camp on three occasions. They fixed and climbed

2004 we had cached rope there. On the 7th we returned to base camp, worried that we might have to organize a rescue for Čmárik and Kopold, who were long overdue on Great Trango. After the latter two returned safely, Koller, Poděbradský, and I began a second attempt. On the 13th we jumared to a ledge at two-thirds height on the face, where we bivouacked. Over the next two days we completed the wall, reaching the notch where we joined Ship of Fools. Although we had climbed the new ground, we wanted to reach the summit. However, on the 16th the weather deteriorated, and as we had no bivouac equipment, we retreated.

We regained the notch on the 19th, this time with a tent, but during the night there was heavy snow, which prevented us from climbing till the afternoon of the 20th, and then only the first two rocky pitches up the ridge. On the 21st we managed three difficult pitches of ice covered with fresh snow and the following day went for the summit. However, Koller took a fall, and the team retreated to our camp at the notch. The 23rd



Igor Koller leading the 10th pitch above the first notch on the northeast ridge of Shipton Spire. This was the first pitch (M5 WI5+ 90°) of the icy headwall that gives access to the summit ridge. Koller led four more pitches to what should have been easy ground below the summit but dangerous snow above and the onset of more bad weather forced the Slovak team down. *Vlado Linek*

was a rest day, and on the 24th we decided that only Koller and I would go for the summit. By 5:00 a.m. we two were at the end of the fixed ropes, in clear, cold weather. With Koller in the lead, we climbed for 10 hours up the sharp ridge, overcoming two towers and a four-pitch ice headwall plastered with snow. At 4:00 p.m. we were hit by a vigorous 30-minute snow storm. At 5:30 p.m., only 80m from the summit, we decided to retreat. We had reached the point where the American topo indicates easy terrain to the top, but we were faced with much snow, dangerous cornices, and hard climbing. As the next storm blew in, we started rappelling and regained our tent in the notch at 2:00 a.m. We named the new route as far as the notch Prisoners of the Shipton (900m), which gave 21 pitches up to VIII and A3. Above, the 14 pitches coinciding with Ship of Fools to the summit ridge gave difficulties of VIII- and WI5+.

After fixing the first two pitches of Ship of Fools, Martin Kloufar and Miroslav Turek made a four-day alpine-style ascent as far as the notch. They waited there for two days in bad

weather and on August 9 retreated. From the 14th to the 16th they climbed the first 15 pitches of Prisoners of the Shipton but again were forced by bad weather to descend.

VLADO LINEK, *Slovak Mountaineering Union, Slovakia*
A full article on the Čmárik-Kopold ascent of Assalam Alaikum
will be found earlier in the Journal.

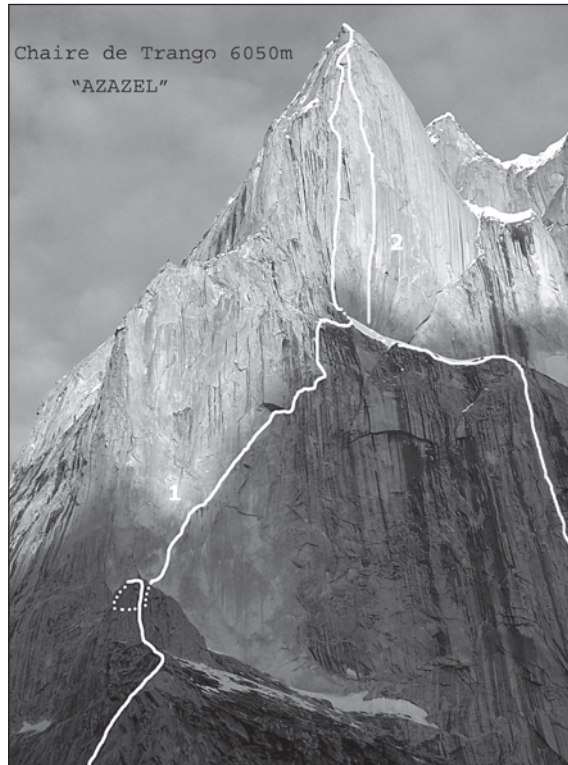
Trango Pulpit, northeast face, Azazel. The spirit of Xaver Bongard is still alive. Grand Voyage remains the ultimate, unrepeated route on Great Trango (6,286m). The steepest flank of the Trango group is the side overlooking the Dunge glacier and our goal was to be a repeat of Grand Voyage. Martial (Cochonette) Dumas, Jean-Yves (Blutch) Fredriksen, and Yann (Mimouse) Mimet, all French, made me an offer I couldn't refuse: to fly from the top of Great Trango while they lowered the sacks and stripped the route.

When we arrived at base camp on the Dunge glacier, the reality we were face-to-face with was different from our dream. Heavy snowfalls in late spring had resulted in bad conditions, even at only 6,000m. Ali Baba, the couloir you climb to reach the base of Grand Voyage was continuously swept by avalanches, even at night. The risk seemed far too great. We changed our objective to Trango Pulpit (6,050m), a prominent shoulder on the long southeast ridge of Great Trango. There was

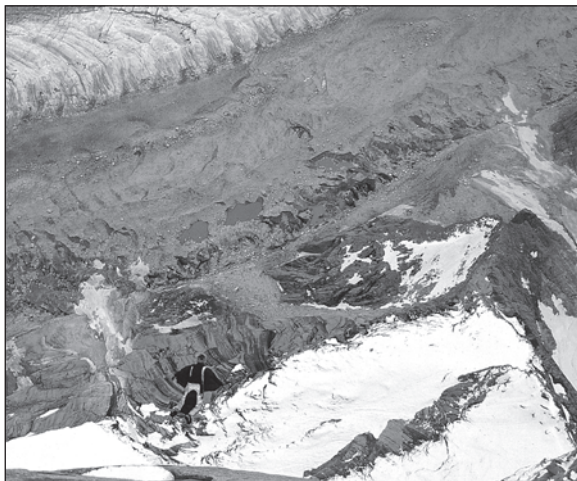
an obvious unclimbed 1,500m line left of the Norwegian route. The first section would ascend a yellow wall that we could approach from the left, the second ascend the prow above.

Our "lightweight" expedition suddenly had more than 400kg to take on the wall: food for 15 days; two portaledge, nine "pigs," and a water drum. We also had 500m of rope and 27 bolts. Except for bolts, we left nothing on the mountain.

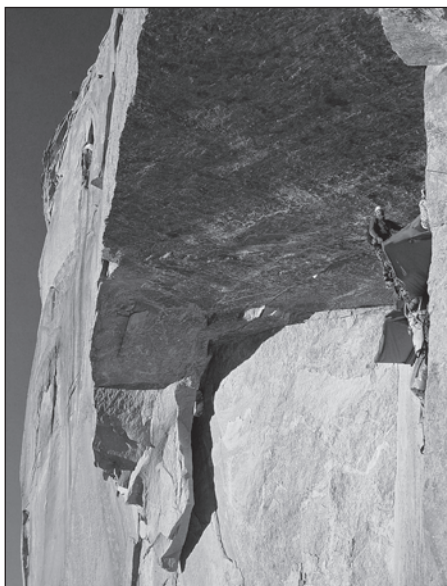
It took four days to bring all the loads to Camp 1, via a snow couloir and a mixed-terrain ridge. After a few days' rest we began our slow ascent in capsule style. The lower wall turned out to be much harder than expected, with first-class aid climbing on mostly beaks, hooks, and expanding flakes. The sky was a perfect blue for seven days, but the heat of the sun kept



The northeast face of Trango Pulpit (6,050m). The left skyline (southeast) ridge is more or less the line taken by More Czech, Less Slovak (ca. 1,400m, VII- A2, Dutka-Rinn-Weisser, 1999). (1) Azazel (ca. 1,500m, VII A3+ M6 VI 4 6a, Beauguey-Dumas-Fredriksen-Mimet, 2005). (2) Norwegian Direct (1,500m, VII A4 5.11, Caspersen-Karlsen-Skjierven-Wold, 1999). *Sam Beauguey*



At the bottom of the picture, Sam Beaughey, wearing a black wing suit, just clears the headwall of Trango Pulpit en-route to a safe landing on the Dunge Glacier over 1,000m below. *Sam Beaughey collection*



Camp 2 suspended below the massif roof ("the Bunker") on the lower wall of the northeast face of Trango Pulpit during the first ascent of Azazel. *Sam Beaughey*

us from relaxing. Melting snow mushrooms near the top would fall and smash into the upper wall. We suspended Camp 2 below a massive roof—"the Bunker." Above, we were forced to climb at night to avoid the "blitz" and safely reach the left edge of the big inclined hanging-glacier/snow-ice shelf at two-thirds height above the glacier. We established Camp 3 on the shelf at 2:00 a.m. after two nights' work.

Starting the upper wall involved two pitches in the fall-line of "Moby Dick," the name we gave to a huge cornice overhanging our route. On my first attempt, in daylight, there was a

loud explosion: Moby Dick's fins had broken off. Down they came, with pieces smashing into the camp and me. I got off lightly with a big fright, but it became obvious we had to move our camp lower down the shelf, where we could dig into the snow. We would also have to continue up the next few pitches at night.

The weather turned bad, and we had to sit out four days in the portaledge. Eventually, in far from perfect conditions, we pushed on. Jumaring icy ropes and hauling the bags through stormy weather was a real pain, but after a mixed pitch and some loose rock, we were able to hang Camp 4. With Moby Dick now some meters to our left, Martial spent five hours climbing the dihedral above camp, mostly through a sweet snow storm. I fixed another pitch to a black roof full of stalactites. Next day was our 16th on the face, and the weather was not bad, just misty. Mimouse radioed from the pitch above, "Sam, I think I've found a possible jump site."

The weather improved, and there were only three pitches left to the top of the wall. However, for the BASE jump it was probably now or never. I checked the fall line and decided to use my winged suit. I'd spent the last 10 days thinking about whether I would clear the big snow shelf at 5,300m while still flying or have to open the canopy beforehand. I knew my fly-

ing profile would be seriously reduced at this altitude, and I'd resemble a tiny bird. I cleaned a small ledge for my feet, unclipped from the last Camelot, and, "three, two, one," jumped into the misty air.

I passed close to the first big ledge 40m below and then worked slightly right in an attempt to target the steepest icy gully descending from the snow shelf, just in case. Finally my wings began to work, and I could move left toward Ali Baba. Seracs passed close by for 45 seconds, till I opened the canopy and landed on Ali Baba's avalanche cone. I was there, with thanks to the team above.

The following day, July 8, feeling a bit sad and without food, my three friends set off for the summit. It was still misty, and at the top of the wall, in a whiteout, they decided to forego the narrow corniced ridge leading to the summit. The descent took two full days, with a night at Camp 2 below "the Bunker." The three had spent 19 days on the wall by the time they returned to base camp.

Our new route, Azazel (1,500m, 300m approach, snow/ice/mixed and moves of 5/5+ to gain Camp 1, then 26 pitches at VII A3+ M6 WI4 6a), lies between the southeast ridge (More Czech, less Slovak; Dutka-Rinn-Weisser, 1999) and the northeast face (Norwegian Direct; Caspersen-Karlsen-Skjerven-Wold, 1999).

SAM BEAUGEY, *France*



The Muztagh Tower (7,284m), Baltoro Muztagh, showing perhaps its most spectacular aspect, the southeast. The route climbed by the French in 1956 (second ascent of the mountain) is marked. The French gained the crest of the southeast ridge via slopes that are largely hidden in this picture but lie behind the Black Tooth (6,719m), the top of which is situated more or less at the point where the upper solid black line turns to dots. Contamine, Keller, Magnone, and Paragot reached the summit less than a week after Brown, Hartog, McNaught-Davis, and Patey had successfully climbed the northwest ridge. While the British route has now been repeated twice, the French awaits a second ascent. *Bruce Normand*

BALTORO MUZTAGH - OTHER

Muztagh Tower, southeast ridge (French Route), attempt; possible first ascents of surrounding peaks. Our expedition began when I developed an obsession with the unclimbed and rarely seen northeast side of 7,284m Muztagh Tower. The team comprised I (a Scot working in Switzerland) as leader, deputy leader Steve Brown (American), climbers Nicolas Bernard (France) and Philippe Oberson (Switzerland), and high-mountain trekkers Patrycja Paruch (Poland, medic), Markus Schneider (German), and Markus Stratmann (German). The team was rounded out by Akhbar, our cook, assistant cook Javed, and liaison officer Lt. Haseeb Ullah.

A streamlined Islamabad-Skardu-Baltoro approach put the squad in base camp on June 9, our sixth day out from Askole and 12th in Pakistan. The camp was located at the confluence of the Younghusband and Biange glaciers, at the foot of the southeast ridge of Muztagh Tower. The heavy Karakoram winter and cold spring was turning into an unstable summer, and while the team's weather forecasts contained detailed information relayed by satellite telephone from a free U.S. web page, they turned out to be hopelessly inaccurate for all but the most general trends.

Oberson and I found a route up the Younghusband icefall and reconnoitred the flat upper basin to within 2km of Moni Pass. There we found a location for an advanced base camp below the northeast face. Bernard and Brown performed a vertical reconnaissance of the first rock peak on the long southeast ridge, electing not to complete the last 15m of their route up a pinnacle, which fell off less than a week later. We established advanced base just before the arrival of a week of good weather, which saw Brown, Oberson, Paruch, Schneider, and Stratmann climb a foresummit of Pt. 5,850m, directly above camp, and then Schneider, Stratmann, and I climb Pt. 6,001m (Tsetse on the Swiss map) by its south ridge. This ascent, completed on July 18, involved snow climbing at 45°, followed by a descent to the west. From the top we obtained a perspective view of Muztagh Tower's north face. Monstrous cornices on the southeast ridge and seracs threatening the true north face and north ridge (which rises from the Moni Pass) left two available options: a snow/ice line with two rock steps way over to the left, which ascended to the col on the southeast ridge between the Black Tooth (6,719m) and Muztagh Tower; or the poorly defined northeast spur falling directly from the summit with a steep rock barrier between 6,600m and 6,900m. For either route to be feasible, the face would need time to dry.

Schneider, Stratmann, and I continued acclimatizing by tackling a peak on the ridge separating the Biange and Godwin-Austen glaciers, climbing a long slope of hardened avalanche debris to steeper exit gullies. Stratmann was forced to turn back due to inadequate crampons, but Schneider and I reached the summit of Pt. 6,345m on July 21, finding it to be a fine vantage point. There was a unique view of Muztagh Tower, with its southwest and northeast ridges in profile, plus a full Baltoro panorama. Meanwhile Bernard, Brown, and Oberson turned their attention to the Biange Glacier icefall above base camp, in an attempt to make the second ascent of the 1956 French route on the southeast ridge. Two night-time outings resulted in a passage through convoluted terrain to gain snow slopes, at 5,500m, below the Black Tooth.

With the return of unstable weather the trekkers departed, and Oberson and I retrieved much of the technical gear from advanced base. As there were no large accumulations of snow on the mountain, the four other climbers made an attempt at the French route, turning back on the snow face below the Black Tooth, due to illness and exhaustion. A second bid, which

reached the same point, was stymied by the arrival of the heaviest snow in two weeks, despite an optimistic forecast.

With time running out, Oberson and I made a final attempt on August 4. We climbed the icefall by night and continued over snow and ice faces to a shoulder, at 6,000m, on the southwest ridge of the Black Tooth. We then climbed, through a snowstorm, up a broad snow slope to the right of the giant serac barrier on the south face. At ca. 6,300m, on the inclined snow terrace above the edge of the serac, avalanche conditions forced a retreat.

On the descent I led down a long snow slope directly to the upper Biange. While crossing a low-angle ice slab, Oberson slipped, pulled me off, and we went for a 100m skid. Although Oberson was unhurt, I sustained impressive facial scratches and a back injury, which was later diagnosed as two compressed vertebrae. Fortunately, I was able to descend unaided, which was convenient, as were too high for helicopter evacuation. I was later assisted through the icefall by Brown, Bernard, Akhbar, and assistant sirdar Mustafa, the last two also high-altitude porters.

The expedition concluded with an immediate walk-out, a bus to Islamabad, administrative wrap-up, and medical attention in Europe. The team members thank Wil and Alta Brown, Dima Geshkenbein, Monika Hronska, and Colin Monteath for their generous assistance.

BRUCE NORMAND, *Switzerland*

Savoia Kangri, southeast face, attempt. A seven member Japanese expedition led by Koichi Ezaki attempted unclimbed Savoia Kangri (a.k.a. Summa Ri, 7,263m), just west of K2. The peak had only been attempted twice. In 1982 a team of Czechoslovakians living in Switzerland reached 6,550m on the 1,800m southeast face above the Savoia Glacier, and in 1998 a British team climbed a bow-shaped couloir through the triangular rock buttress left of the Czech Route, then followed the right edge of the big south-facing ice slope above to gain the upper southeast ridge. They climbed the ridge to 7,000m, before retreating in deep unstable snow. The Japanese opted to attempt the British line.

They established base camp on the Baltoro below Angel Peak, at 5,100m, and an advanced base on the Savoia glacier, at 5,300m. On July 25 the team placed a temporary camp at the start of the bow-shaped snow couloir, and on August 7 situated Camp 1 high in the gully, at 6,100m. The same day members climbed another six pitches to 6,300m, close to the top of the couloir, but thereafter were unable to regain this high point.

TAMOTSU NAKAMURA AND THE JAPANESE ALPINE NEWS

K2 - correction. Iván Vallejo was part of the Spanish film crew from the “Al Filo de lo Imposible” TV series, as reported in *AAJ 2005*, p. 352. However, Vallejo is not Basque but Ecuadorian.

MARCELO SCANU, *Argentina*

Broad Peak, southwest face. At 11:30 a.m. on July 25 Sergey Samoilov and Denis Urubko from Kazakhstan stepped onto the summit of Broad Peak (8,047m) after a remarkable ascent of the previously unclimbed southwest face. The two climbed the 2,500m route alpine-style, in six days. On the lower part of the face they had to overcome two steep rock bands, the first at ca.

6,300m and the second above 6,550m. These gave difficulties up to F6b and A2, with an M5 finish. They avoided freshly laden snow slopes higher up by climbing rock ribs, which involved a section of M6+ at over 7,400m. Reaching the southeast ridge at 7,950m also involved tricky mixed terrain (M4+), and the pair then had to battle strong winds before traversing the summit and descending the Normal Route. The full story of this ascent, which was nominated for the Piolet d'Or, appears earlier in this *Journal*.

Central Kharut Peak, attempt. I led a commercially organized expedition for Adventure Peaks to attempt the unclimbed Central Kharut Peak (6,824m on the new Polish map). The mountain is believed to have been attempted only once before. A Japanese party climbed to the col between Central Kharut and the virgin Kharut Pyramid (6,402m on the Polish map), then reached a high point on the rocky shoulder of the ridge above. [The Kharut peaks lie immediately northeast of K2's Abruzzi Ridge. In 1974 Tatsuro Arioka's expedition, which was trying to climb Broad Peak North, reached the Sella Pass, from where two members, Hidenori Iwamoto and Isumi Kita, climbed a peak immediately to the northwest, the height of which they gave as 6,394m. This is most likely Central Kharut South, the rocky shoulder on the southwest ridge of Central Kharut, now assigned the height of 6,455m on the new Polish map—Ed.]

Our expedition planned to camp on the Sella Pass and first climb Kharut Pyramid, to aid our acclimatization, but conditions were not good. There was a considerable amount of snow left from the winter (no one summited neighboring K2), and unstable weather did not improve the situation. From base camp we could see that the snow slope leading to the col was covered with avalanche debris, while the glacier approach [up the West Kharut Glacier—Ed.] was seriously crevassed. A client and one of our high-altitude porters had to be extracted from slots. However, our main problem was time, or lack of it. We had experienced long delays in both Islamabad and Skardu due to administrative work at the Ministry, a holiday period when the Ministry was shut, and unexpected military briefings in Skardu. When we eventually arrived at the mountain, there was not enough time to make a serious attempt, and our high point was on the approach glacier. We had reliable weather reports at base camp, and when a good window was finally forecast, we made our escape over the Gondokoro La, rather than take the long trek out via the Baltoro. Adventure Peaks hopes to return in July-August 2006.

NICK CARTER, *United Kingdom*

MASHERBRUM RANGE

CHARAKUSA VALLEY

Chogolisa Glacier: Pk. 5,500m, north face; Raven's Peak, south face; Capucin, south face; Pk. 6,000m, northwest face. Charakusa Glacier: Iqbal's Wall, attempt. As in 2004, when we climbed above the Chogolisa Glacier, north of the Charakusa, completing four new routes (*AAJ 2005*, p. 354) our plan was to visit the Kondus and Saltoro valleys. However, the Pakistan government denied us a permit just two weeks before we were due to leave Italy for the mountains, so we returned to the Chogolisa and established base camp on the north side of the entrance to the Beusten Glacier below Raven's Peak.

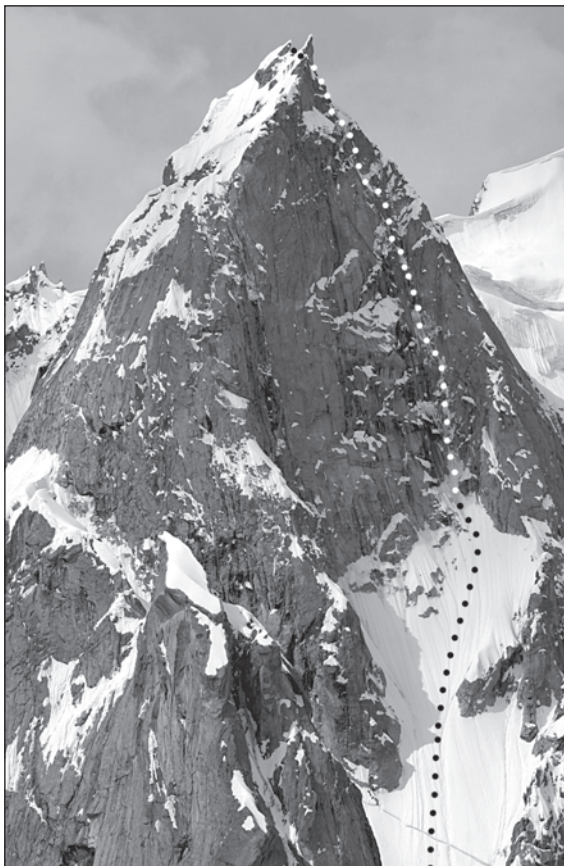
On June 18 Hervé Barmasse, Ezio Marlier, and Fabio Salini climbed the north face of virgin Pk. 5,500m, via a line they named Fast and Furious. They climbed the 700m mixed route in a day; it had a difficult upper section of V/4. The second freed a short section of A1 at M6. The trio reached the summit ridge but didn't continue to the highest point, a little spire 10m above. They rappelled the route. [This summit appears to lie a short distance east along the ridge from Pointed and Crested peaks on the south side of the Beusten—Ed.]

On June 22 Marlier and Salini put up a new line on the left side of the south face of Raven's Peak (ca. 5,300m). Green Tea is eight pitches long and 6b, with a short section of A1 (one bolt). In 2004 we had climbed Luna Caprese (1,000m, 22 pitches, 6c+), a similar line to the original 1987 British Route, toward the right side of the main face.

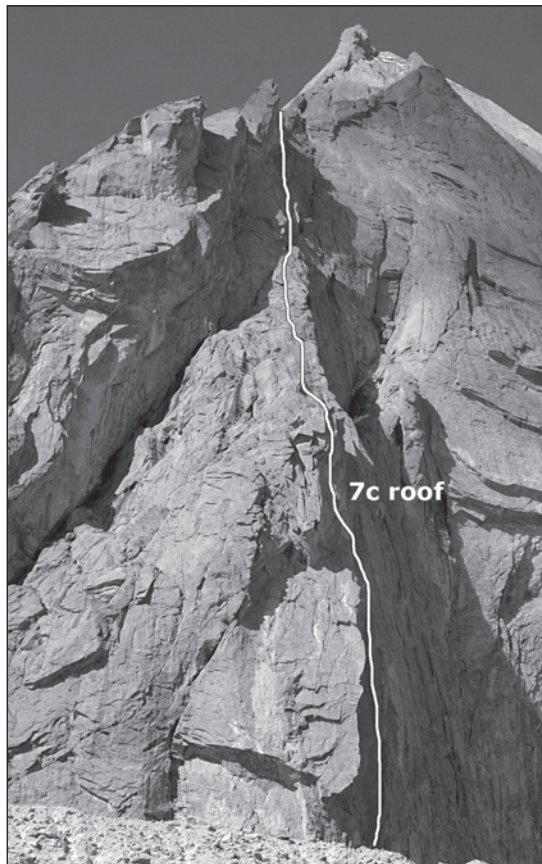
From June 16 to 26 Barmasse, Cristian Brenna, Francesca Chenal, and I climbed a big line up the left and steepest part of Raven's south face. We placed fixed ropes on the first 250 difficult meters and used bolts on the first pillar, with a view to a possible all-free, one-day ascent later. We completed Up and Down after six days and 800m of climbing. It has 16 pitches, up to 6c/6c+ and A1, and terminates on the left-hand ridge some distance below the summit. On July 10 Brenna, belayed by Giovanni Ongaro, climbed the route free in one day. They rated the crux (sixth) pitch 7c, but there were many pitches at 7a and 7b. I think this is one of the best and most difficult free climbs in the Karakoram.

From June 24 to 26 Gianluca Bellin and Ongaro climbed the 5,500m Capucin. [This fine spire lies on the south flank of Sheep Peak, up and right from Raven Peak, and was dubbed the Dru by the 1987 British party—Ed.] Duri e Puri is a relatively short (400m, 12 pitches) but difficult "big wall," with difficulties up to 6b and new wave A2. Bellin and Ongaro climbed the route, which ascends the south face and finishes on the southeast ridge below the summit, capsule style, with two nights spent in portaledge.

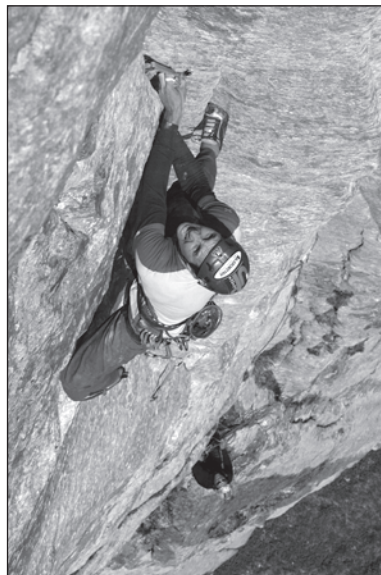
On June 28 Barmasse and Giovanni Pagnoncelli climbed the northwest face of an unnamed and previously virgin ca. 6,000m peak on the long west ridge of Farol. The 1,000m route had ice up to 60° and a little mixed terrain close to the summit. However, only Barmasse



Peak 5,500m, on the south side of the Beusten Glacier, showing Fast and Furious. Luca Maspes collection



The left side of the south face of Raven's Peak (ca. 5,300m), Beusten Glacier, showing the line of Up and Down (800m of climbing, 6c/6c+ A1; Barmasse-Brenna-Chenal-Maspes, 2005). The route was later free climbed in a day by Brenna at 7c to give one of the hardest free routes in the Karakoram. The crux roof is marked. *Giovanni Pagnoncelli/Luca Maspes collection*



Cristian Brenna on pitch five (7b) of Up and Down during the first free ascent. The pitch above, which involved a 7c roof, provided the crux of the free ascent. *Hervé Barmasse/Luca Maspes collection*

reached the highest point. [This peak lies east along the ridge from Pk. 5,500m mentioned above and appears to be in a similar location to a summit marked Fiona Peak on Jerzy Wala's 2005 1:100,000 sketch map of the K6 and Chogolisa groups—Ed.]

Before leaving base camp on the Chogolisa, Brenna and I climbed many boulder problems up to Font 7b, and after four days working a particularly difficult problem, Brenna created Master of Survivor, at Font 7c/7c+, no mean feat for the altitude.

During the last week of our expedition Barmasse, Brenna, and I moved to the Charakusa Glacier to attempt a new route on Iqbal's Wall, a formation I climbed in 1998 with Natale Villa and Galen Rowell. On July 19 we climbed six pitches, up to 6b/6b+, using traditional protection but were



Hervé Barmasse following a difficult mixed section of Fast and Furious on the north face of Peak 5,500m. *Fabio Salini/Luca Maspes collection*



Farol Central Peak (ca. 6,350m) with the line of the south pillar, climbed by Cedric Haehlen and Hans Mitterer, facing the camera. The route gave over 1,300m of ascent from the glacier, the pair reaching the crest via the snow ramp indicated. They bivouacked once at the end of the long rocky section, below the final snowfields leading up to the summit tower. They rappelled the snow face to the left, between seracs and the pillar. *Hans Mitterer.*

the foot of the pillar, and started our ascent at midnight on July 26. We first climbed a big snow ramp leading to the start of the rock ridge at 5,650m. Arriving there at dawn, we were confronted with a demanding pitch of near-featureless vertical granite. The terrain above provided several pitches of challenging climbing, crossing loose flakes, followed by steep ice and mixed climbing through beautiful sound granite. Every tower and gendarme proved unavoidable, and between them was much deep soft snow, through which we had to wade, often up to our waists. Several vertical snow walls consumed much time and energy. Finally, we reached the end of the ridge at 8:00 p.m. and bivouacked under a cornice that formed the start of the summit snowfield.

Next morning we had a hard fight negotiating waist-deep snow, before reaching the summit tower. This final section began with a wonderful mixed pitch, but the last few rope lengths,

stopped by bad rock on the final 100m. Two days later we repeated the first four pitches of Tasty Talking (300m, 11 pitches, III 5.10+, House-Prezelj-Swenson, 2004) on the southeast ridge of 5,200m Naysner Brakk, then rappelled into the gully on the right and continued to the summit via the classic British Route up the north ridge (300m, British VS plus aid; climbed free at 5.10-, Burnage-Hamilton, 1988).

LUCA MASPES, *UP project, Italy*

Central Farol Peak, probable first ascent. At the start of July our German-Swiss Expedition (Cedric Haehlen, Urs Stoecker, Rainer Treppte, and I) left for the Charakusa Valley. Like other expeditions in 2005, we were refused permits for K7 or K6 for security/safety reasons. However, we decided to go anyway and look at 5,000m-6,000m peaks, as we all felt there must be plenty of worthy objectives giving good climbing.

After acclimatizing with an ascent of Sulo Peak (5,950m), Cedric and I climbed the middle summit of the three Farol Peaks, via the striking south pillar. We camped on the glacier at 5,000m, close to



Negotiating one of the gendarmes on the middle section of the south ridge of Farol Central Peak. *Hans Mitterer.*

on steep smooth slabs covered with a thin layer of snow, demanded a lot more concentration. The last 30m of steep, waist-deep snow slope nearly exhausted us. We found no evidence of previous passage on the route and assume we made a first ascent. Jan Mersch and a German party attempted the route a few days before us and also found no trace of previous attempts. As to grades, we climbed several rock pitches between V and VI, a few meters of A1 on the last big gendarme of the rock ridge, two pitches of M6 or M7 on the first part of the pillar, and a pitch of M6 on the summit tower.

Our altimeter read 6,350m on top, confirming our view that the West (Main) Summit (6,370m) was only slightly higher than us. The East Summit was around the same height and the Far East somewhat lower. Cedric and I descended by rappelling to the big snowfield, then on down between glacier and pillar. Although exciting, due to horrifying seracs, it was quick, and we reached base camp late in the afternoon.

During the next three weeks the weather was generally bad with only a few isolated fine days. We used these to repeat the popular British Route (north ridge) on the fantastic pyramid of Naysar Brakk (5,200m), the South West Couloir of Beatrice (ca. 5,800m), and a rock route (Asteroid Valley) on Iqbal wall (ca. 5,400m).

HANS MITTERER, *Germany*

Editor's note: In 2004 a guided CAF expedition of primarily young French climbers reported attempting Farol Central by the 1,400m south spur (TD+) and a summit they refer to as the Fourth Point of Farol (6,200m) via a line of icefalls, followed by big wall climbing (ED). It has not been possible to confirm their lines; they may have attempted the south spur of the West Summit.

Hassin Peak and the East Peak of Farol, attempts. On August 12 Steve Swenson and I, joined by Hans Mitterer from Germany, hiked up to the base of the west buttress of unclimbed Hassin Peak (ca. 6,300m) at the head of the Charakusa Glacier. Hassin is the local name for the mountain and means "beautiful peak." The following day we climbed 60° icefields, topped by a couple of rope lengths of near-vertical ice, to reach the crest of the buttress. We wound our way up, linking snow couloirs, dry chimneys, and strips of perfect styrofoam ice, as well as insubstantial slush tucked into the backs of corners. Just as the sun was leaving the mountain, we popped back out on the crest, where a ropelength or two of snow climbing yielded a promising spot for the bivouac tent. The summit was only 800m above; the next day we would leave the camping gear and make a dash for it.

Leaving the bivouac in the morning we climbed a moderate 60-70° snow and ice face, but as the day wore on, it warmed up considerably. By the time we were negotiating the final



Looking at the eastern rim of the Charakusa Glacier and the unclimbed Hassin Peak (ca. 6,300m). The route on the west buttress attempted by Mitterer, Slawinski and Swenson, and their bivouac site, is marked. Their highpoint was ca. 6,000m. The skyline ridge on the right leads up to K6 (7,282m). Peaks to the left of Hassin are also unclimbed.
Raphael Slawinski

mixed ground at 6,000m, the sun was on us, rapidly turning the steep summit snow slopes to the consistency of cotton candy. The heat and the altitude were also taking a toll on us, slowing us to a breathless crawl. Though the summit lay less than 300m above, we were unlikely to reach it before dark. Finding safe belay and rappel anchors by headlamp would not be easy, and we were unwilling to commit to spending a night out with nothing but the clothes on our backs. Sadly, we drilled the first of many V-threads in a rare patch of ice and slid down the ropes. We regained the tent just as the sun sank below the horizon. The following morning, still under cloudless skies, we continued our descent, reaching the glacier in the early afternoon, after making a total of 30 rappels, each of 70m.

Steve and I made another attempt on Hassin Peak, but bad weather turned us back before we'd crossed the bergschrund. There was not enough time for a third attempt, so on August 22 we turned our attention to a striking ice line on the right-hand Farol Peak (ca. 6,200m). It looked like it might go in one push.

The evening before found us camped on moraines below the triple-summitted Farol. By the time the sun rose, we were already cramponing up the lower slopes of our chosen couloir. We had made the approach in predawn darkness, crossing a wasteland of ice avalanche debris. But we were safe now, with nothing but rock walls rearing above, breached by a discontinuous white line. We roped up at the base of a steep curtain of chandeliers that made me feel like I was back at home in the Canadian Rockies. A couple of pitches of steep ice, followed by a short icefield, brought us to the base of what would prove to be the crux. The pitch went slowly, and by the time we were reunited at the belay, it was clear we would be hard-pressed to top out



The south face of the Farol Peaks. The left-hand or West Summit is the highest at 6,370m. The middle summit, Farol Central (ca. 6,350m), was climbed in 2005 by Haehlen and Mitterer via the south pillar facing the camera. The East Summit to the right is probably around the same height as the Central, while the Far East or Fourth Farol Peak is ca. 6,200m. The line attempted on Far East by Slawinski and Swenson is marked. French are also believed to have tried a route in this vicinity during 2004. *Raphael Slawinski*

before dark. Another pitch of steep, decaying ice awaited, and who cared if it led anywhere or not? It was climbing. From the snowfield at its top we finally got a close view of the blank, overhanging headwall blocking the couloir. As we began the rappels, at least we had the satisfaction of having climbed until we were stopped.

RAPHAEL SLAWINSKI, *Canada*

NANGMA VALLEY

“Barasa” or “Changi Peak,” first ascent. Tomasz Polok and I established base camp on September 8 at 4,100m on the south side of the Nangma Valley, at the foot of Rounkangchan III. The north face of this peak is a prominent 500-600m rock wall, which we attempted twice in a somewhat heavyweight style. However, the granite was rotten, and the cracks were choked with earth, making the whole climb much less attractive than it had appeared from a distance. After our second attempt, our local guide, Alika from Khande, told us that a French party had climbed this wall by a route that was probably quite close to our planned line. We therefore turned our attention to the opposite side of the valley and the truncated ridges and buttresses of the better-known Changi Tower (a.k.a. Changui Tower, ca. 5,820m on Jerzy Wala’s 2004 1:50,000 map), planning to do a climb in lightweight style on better rock.

Our new route climbs the southwest pillar of the final (lowest) tower on the southwest



Barasa or Changi Peak, a ca. 5,000m rock formation on the southwest ridge of Changi Tower's East Summit, showing Moonlight Pillar. In the background are peaks on the eastern side of the Nangma Glacier. *Jan Kuczera*

ridge of Changi Tower's East Summit. We called this ca. 5,000m formation "Barasa" or "Changi Peak." The route is 500-550m high and 900m long, with difficulties up to VII. Initially, there was 200m of straightforward, less-steep rock up to IV, which we climbed without belays. Above lay 14 harder pitches to the summit (we used 50m ropes). The difficulties generally increased the higher we climbed. After two pitches of IV+ were pitches of V and VI, with a final pitch of VII. The 13th seemed the hardest: grade VI smearing with no protection. The 11th pitch featured a sort of rock tunnel 20m long. Most of climbing was very

delicate, with small edges and questionable protection in less than sound granite. Much of it, particularly on the compact slabs, was more or less unprotected and rather risky, due to slightly brittle granite. We protected ourselves mainly with Friends, seldom with pitons. We placed one bolt, on the last stance, as there was no possibility for anything else. Overall, the pillar is not very steep, but high up there are almost-vertical sections.

We completed the route in 11 hours on September 17, naming it "Moonlight Pillar." We took minimal gear and no warm clothes. We descended by rappelling 300m northwest into the gully between our peak and Changui Tower, then carried on down to the southwest. On pitches four and five we came upon rappel slings, which we think might have been left in 2005 by a team unknown to us.

The names for our peak come from our guide Alika, who had previously served other Polish parties. However, we are not sure whether the name "Barasa" refers to our small summit or a bigger part of the Changi Tower massif. Alika also had some sort of illustrated climbing guide to the valley, but in it was no information about climbing on our pillar.

JAN KUCZERA, *Klub Wysokogórski Katowice, Poland*