



Giabul and Namka Tokpo valleys, various ascents and G22 (6,050m) attempt

India, Zaskar

In August, with five other members of the Scottish Mountaineering Club, I visited the Namka Tokpo valley of Zaskar, not that far from the frontier with Pakistan. The attraction wasn't the potential for border conflicts, for which Scots are developing a reputation, nor was it the availability of whisky, because we'd brought our own. The draw was a report written by Kimikazu Sakamoto (AAJ 2012), who alerted the expeditioning world to a group of jagged mountains and not-impossible access. And the fact that a group of 70-year-olds got to the foot of these mountains gave us hope we'd have a decent chance. It was only later we realized that the average age of our group wasn't too much below that of the Japanese. But it was enough.

We reached base camp in the Namka Tokpo (4,400m, 33°02'43" N, 77°07'26" E) eight days after landing in Delhi. Sakamoto's G22 was our primary objective. We established advanced base at ca 4,900m, southwest from base camp and above Purgatory Moraine. The group then split into two teams. Geoff Cohen and Des Rubens would travel northwest and attempt Peak 6,150m (as marked on the Olizane map; between G18 and G22); Bob Hamilton, Steve Kennedy, Andy Nisbet, and I would head south to G22.

From the col south of G18, four pitches along exposed snow slopes on the south flank took Cohen and Rubens to the northwest ridge of Peak 6,150m. The rocky arête was followed to a prominent level section, after which an easier-angled snow ridge led to the top. The climb was about AD, and the peak named Mama Ri (Old Man's Peak).

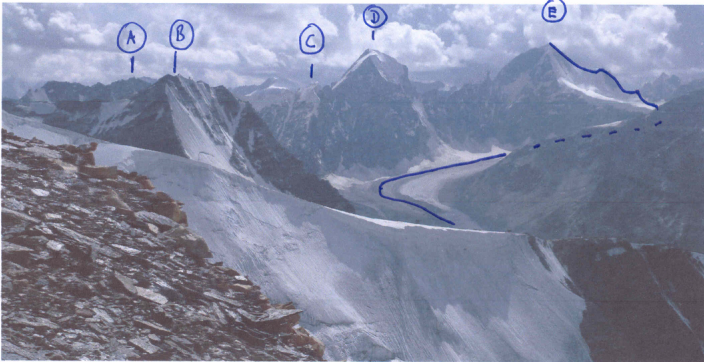
Hamilton, Kennedy, Nisbet, and I established Camp 1 (5,400m) just below the col separating G22 and G23. On the 17th we reached the southeast ridge of G22, which was at first rocky then snowy. Arriving on a subsidiary summit (Shan Ri, or Snow Leopard Peak, 5,750m), we saw that the continuation was considerably less surmountable than anticipated. We moved back to the col, decided it was too early to return to Camp 1, and so carried on southeast along a snowy ridge, then loose rock, to the tottering summit tower of G23. Gaining its top required UIAA III rock climbing, and we didn't dare sneeze when on it. We dubbed this 5,850m peak Scottish Ri.

Susan Jensen, U.K.

Images



Northwest ridge and summit of G23.



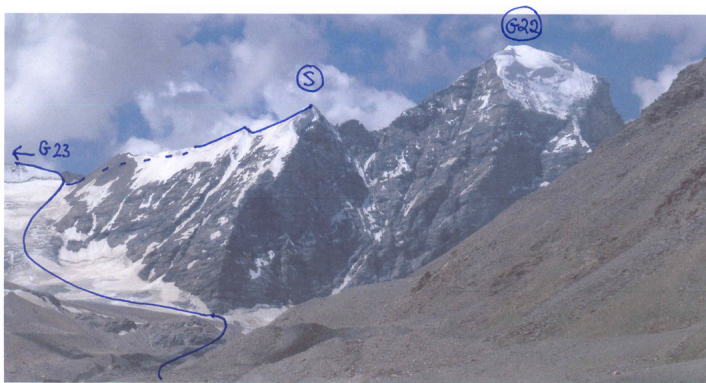
Looking southwest from G26 up the Namka Tokpo. (A) G23. (B) G25. (C) Shan Ri. (D) G22. (E) Mama Ri and route of ascent up northwest ridge.



Looking southwest from G26 up the Namka Tokpo.



Looking southwest from G26 up the Namka Tokpo. (A) Shan Ri and route of ascent on southeast ridge. (B) Unclimbed G22. (C) Mama Ri and route of ascent up northwest ridge.



Head of the Namka Tokpo from the northeast. (S) Shan Ri and route of ascent.



Head of the Namka Tokpo from the northeast, Shan Ri.

Article Details

Author	Susan Jensen, U.K.
Publication	AAJ
Volume	55
Issue	87
Page	314
Copyright Date	2013
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions