



## AAC Publications

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### **Pensilungpa Glacier, Hidden Peak 5,802m, north-northwest ridge; Twin Peak East (5,825m), north face.**

India, Zaskar

Overshadowed by its more extensive neighbour, the Durung Drung Valley immediately east, the Pensilungpa Valley is rarely visited. It does, however, have some fine unclimbed mountains, as Mike Pinney, Chris Storie, Tony Westcott, and I found on our visit in September. The Pensilungpa Valley, which rises southwest from the Kargil-Padam road where it crosses the Pensi La (4,485m), has five significant tributary glaciers flowing from the Pensilungpa–Durung Drung divide to the southeast. Marked glacial recession has meant that these are no longer contiguous with the main ice flow, and instead terminate in extensive, but negotiable, boulder fields. As numbered from the road, we explored the second, third, and fourth of these sub-glaciers, using four separate high camps.

The first objective, above Camp 2 at 5,223m on the third tributary, was a summit clearly identified from Google satellite images, yet hidden from any point in the valley by a dominant triangular peak north of the watershed that we called Pyramid Peak. On September 13, Pinney, Westcott, and I crisscrossed the maze of crevasses on the steep section of the glacier to reach a prominent rocky col to the south of Pyramid Peak. From here a short, steep snow climb up the north-northwest ridge of our chosen peak led to a compact, rocky summit at 5,802m GPS with extensive views over the Durung Drung glacier. We named it, appropriately, Hidden Peak (PD+).

Six days later, Pinney, Westcott, and I established Camp 4 at 5,186m on the second tributary. On the 21st we climbed from here to a snowy col at the head of the glacier and then up the north face of a mountain with two rocky summits that we called Twin Peak. We reached the first (east) summit (5,798m on the Indian map, 5,825m GPS; AD) but declined to attempt the slightly higher summit, an impressive sharp spire.

On the 17th a creditable attempt was made on the north-northeast ridge of Peak 5,641m at the foot of the fourth tributary. A combination of increasing technical difficulty and too low an assault camp resulted in retreat around 5,576m. We estimated this peak to be somewhat higher than the 5,641m noted on the Indian map.

Derek Buckle, Alpine Club, U.K.

Editor's note: Over the years there has been much activity on the neighboring Durung Drung Glacier, including possible ascents of one or more 5,000ers on the divide between it and the Pensilungpa Valley, notably by Italians in the early 1980s. However, inconsistent peak heights and indefinite reports make these impossible to identify.

## Images



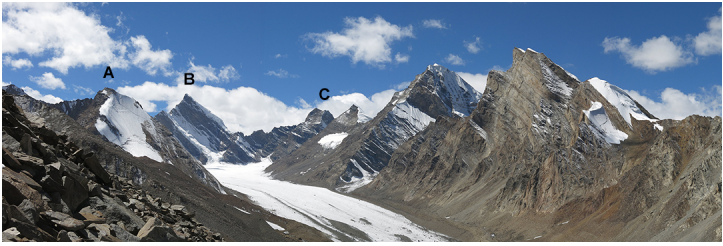
Z8 (6,050m). This peak, first climbed in 1978 by Italians via the righthand (west-northwest) ridge, lies above the Z8 Glacier, the first tributary glacier above the road leading up to the Durung Drung divide. The north face, seen here, is thought to be unclimbed.



Seen from the east top of Twin Peak: (A) Sickel Moon, (B) Hidden Peak, (C) Twin Peak west spire, and (D) Pt. 6,048m.



Twin Peak from the second tributary glacier. The lower lefthand summit was reached.



Looking south toward peaks around the head of the Pensilungpa Glacier. (A) Unclimbed Pt. 5,641m (attempted in 2013). (B) Unclimbed Pt. 6,197m. (C) Unclimbed Pt. 6,048m.

## Article Details

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