



Ultar (Ultar Sar, 7,388m), Southeast Pillar Attempt

Asia, Pakistan, Karakoram, Batura Muztagh

Giri-Giri boys Fumitaka Ichimura and Yusuke Sato made the best attempt to date on the magnificent southeast pillar of Ultar. On their alpine-style push they left 4,300m base camp on September 6, ascended the glacier, and climbed to a col below a gully at 4,500m, where they bivouacked. Next day, setting off with heavy packs loaded with one week's food, they climbed the gully. It was a hot day, and there was much melting snow and running water. Their gloves, jackets, and even inner boots soon became soaked. At 1 p.m. they reached a second col at 5,000m and after fixing one pitch above, bivouacked until 4 a.m. the following morning. This day turned out to be equally hot, and they climbed without jackets or fleeces, finally making a long traverse to a bergschrund at 5,800m, which they reached at 7 p.m.

On the fourth day they began at 5 a.m. under a starry sky, but it soon started to snow. Climbing through loose mixed terrain, with only one or two points of protection on each 60m pitch, they were finally hit by a thunderstorm and bivouacked at 6 p.m. under the upper wall, at 6,350m. Next day the weather was bad, and they remained in the tent, but the following morning they resumed climbing at 5:30 a.m. The weather was still far from perfect, and the ground above very steep. They reached 6,500m in worsening snow conditions, before retreating. They returned to the bivouac site and over the next two days made 30 rappels to the first col at 4,500m. The day after, they regained base camp shortly after noon. Sato reported the climbing was good, and they hope to return for another try.

— **Hiroshi Hagiwara, Editor, Rock&Snow, Japan**

Editor's Note: The first known attempt on this 3,000m "Walker Spur" took place in August 1992, when Toshio Narita and two Japanese friends retreated from a height of 5,400m. In 2000 unsettled weather stopped Frenchmen Jerome Blanc Gras, Yannick Graziani, Erwin le Lann, and Hervé Qualizza from setting foot on the pillar. Graziani returned in 2005 with Christian Trommsdorff. Noting that the main difficulties are probably located on the rock barrier at 7,000m, they planned to first climb to a small col on the pillar at 6,000m in order to acclimatize, then descend for a rest before making an alpine-style push for the top. In difficult conditions they reached 5,800m—half height on the pillar but a long way from the summit— before abandoning their attempt.

Images

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