



## AAC Publications

---

### **K7 West, Southwest Pillar, The Children of Hushe**

Asia, Pakistan, Charakusa Valley

The Karakoram 2009 Trentina Expedition—Michele Cagol, Fabio Leoni, Elio Orlandi, and I, all over 40 years old—proved to be a success, without injuries or other nasty surprises. We managed a new route up the southwest pillar of K7 West, reaching an altitude of ca 5,700m. We climbed for eight consecutive days, plus four days to prepare the ascent. The climbing was demanding, but the biggest question mark was the altitude. Base camp was positioned at 4,200m, and moving up with loads, acclimatizing slowly, proved very difficult.

Altitude sickness is deceitful—it appears suddenly, and this creates deep insecurity, much more so than the unpredictable weather in Patagonia. We set off on July 31, ready to stay on the wall for an extended period of time, and after a demanding first day we established a bivy at 5,000m. After a sparing meal, we settled down for the night, but a few hours later I started to have trouble breathing, gasping for breath as if I had asthma. I remained awake all night, sitting up, and the next morning we swiftly descended to base camp, where I quickly started to feel better.

After a day's rest we were ready to start again, but the following night Michele felt poorly: He had the same symptoms as I had, plus his limbs had swollen up. We waited another day, and then, seeing that he felt better, we set off yet again with a thousand uncertainties whizzing through our minds. This time we established our tents at 5,200m. At this point, Elio started to feel the effects of altitude, but thanks to Diamox he didn't have to descend—otherwise we would have risked running out of time. Despite everything, climbing determinedly, we completed our 1,100m rock route (7b A2) at the top of the wall on August 10.

By the time we descended, we were well acclimatized, so Fabio Leoni and I used our final day to quickly climb spectacular Naisa Brakk (ca 5,200m), an incredible natural copy of an Egyptian pyramid that stands 1,000m high. We reached the summit on August 14, Pakistan's independence day, and from the top we listened to music from base camp, where the officers and cooks of various expeditions had organized a party and the national anthems of all the countries present—Pakistan, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Australia, and New Zealand—were being played.

The trip was a great adventure, not only from a mountaineering point of view but also from the human side. The biggest surprise was the local population, which proved completely the opposite of what is described in Western mass media. The people we met were kind, friendly, and happy, despite their extreme poverty. We called our new route the Children of Hushe to honor the village from which we departed.

In Hushe we had the most emotional and beautiful experience of the entire expedition, far more intense than reaching the top of our route. We had brought 250 notepads and 1,000 colored pens for the children. Hushe is a small village of perhaps 50 mud huts, but when word got out that we were giving away these presents, we were joined by more than 500 children. We attempted to make up for having underestimated how much would be needed by raiding the small village store and distributing everything as fairly as possible. We were so touched by this display that it was only natural that we dedicate our route to these marvelous children.

**For the children of Hushe:** Anyone who would like to learn more about and participate in projects for the Hushe children can write to [peribambinidihushe@excite.it](mailto:peribambinidihushe@excite.it). The first project is to help with the

**building of a new college at Skardu, which will enable the Hushe children to continue school after seventh grade.**

Editor's note: Three lines now have been climbed on the rock buttresses of the subpeak southwest of K7 West (the "southwest pillar"): Badal (Favresse-Favresse-Pustelnik, Villanueva, 2007); Luna (Cesen-Sisernik-Hrastelj, 2008); and Children of Hushe (Cagol-Larcher-Leoni-Orlandi, 2009), reaching, each topping out at 5,500m to ca 5,800m. However, no team has continued to the summit of the unclimbed ca. 6,200m peak above the rock walls—an obvious prize.

## Images



The line of Children of Hushe on the southwest pillar of K7 West. The climb was just to the right of the 2007 Belgian-Polish line.

## Article Details

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Author         | Rolando Larcher, Società Alpinisti Tridentini / Club Alpino Accademico It |
| Publication    | AAJ   |
| Volume         | 0   |
| Issue          | 0   |
| Page           | 0   |
| Copyright Date | 2010  |
| Article Type   | Climbs and expeditions  |