



AAC Publications

Sedoy Strazh (Byeliy East) and Other First Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Western Kokshaal-Too

We first heard about Byeliy in 2009 from Nikolai Bandalet, during a joint expedition with Belorussians to Kyzyl Asker. At that time it was the highest unclimbed peak in the Western Kokshaal-Too. In December 2014 we were awarded a grant from the Moscow Mountaineering Federation to mount an expedition to Byeliy, but due to the economic situation in Russia we had to find more people to make the trip financially viable. In the end we had a team of nine, three of whom had never been to the mountains before. Then, as we began to research, we discovered Byeliy had actually been climbed in 2011 by Slovenians. Instead, we focused on virgin Peak 5,481m (sometimes referred to as Byeliy East). Although it had been the aim of several parties, there had not been a serious attempt.

The expedition comprised the inexperienced Nikolai Andreev, Ekaterina Rachinskaya, Angelina Zelikova, and instructor Ruslan Sharifullin (Team III); Timur Galimzyanov and Vladimir Nikitin (Team II); and Dmitry Grigoriev, Sergey Nilov, and me (Team I). We left Moscow on July 31. The idea was that each team would work mostly independently.

Upon arriving in the mountains, Sergey and I made a reconnaissance of Peak 5,481m and were unpleasantly surprised to find garbage dating back four or five years on the glacier below the southeast face. On August 8, Team III made the first ascent of Peak 4,585m (Russian 1B), naming it Tashgul (Stone Flower). The same day Team II, with Grigoriev, made the first ascent of Peak 5,020m (2A), naming in Gorin in honor of the Russian scientist. On the 12th the three-man Team II made the first ascent of Peak 4,990m (3A), naming it Pamyati Druzey ("In Memory of Friends"), while Team III repeated the ascent of Gorin. These three summits were climbed from the Sarychat Glacier.

On the 13th, Team I and Team II, together with Nikolai and Ekaterina, took two melons and some pancakes and ran up Peak Novey (4,978m, second ascent of the mountain but by a new route, the east face and north ridge), directly above base camp. Just below the top we were hit by a storm and had to wait for it to clear before we could all reach the summit (2A).

On the 14th, Nikolai, Ekaterina, Angelina, and Timur took four horses and went to the hunter's camp at Bulat-M, and from there to Bishkek. Next day, Team I and the new Team II (Ruslan and Vladimir) went from base camp to the Fersmana Glacier, and on the 16th, while Team I started their ascent of the northeast face of Peak 5,481m (the steepest aspect, but also the safest), Team II reached the col north of Korsun (5,320m). On the 17th they climbed Chudo ("Miracle," 5,100m, 2A), and on the 18th Prozrachnaya ("Transparent," 5,070m, 2A). On the 19th they descended the Malitskogo Glacier and returned to base camp.

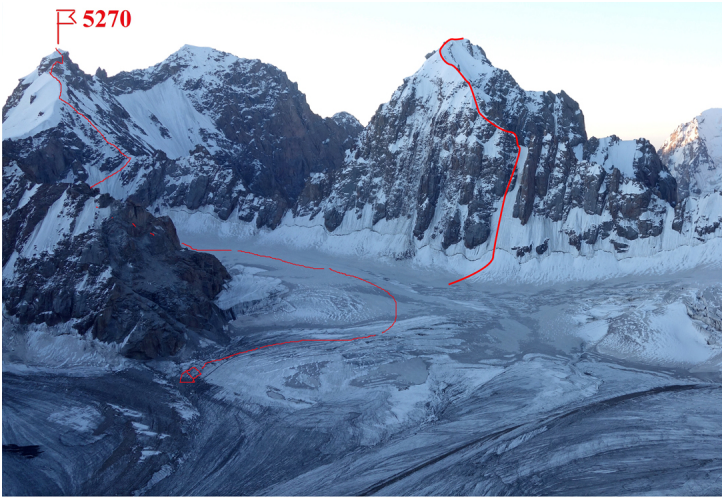
Meanwhile, Dmitry, Sergey, and I climbed Peak 5,481m in five days, reaching the top at 2 p.m. on the 20th. We had to wait there for two hours as a storm moved in and eliminated visibility, but once it was possible to see the way down, we set off to the northwest and descended to a bivouac in the bergschrund that night. The following day we were back on the Fersmana, having traversed the mountain. We have named the peak Sedoy Strazh ("Gray-haired Guardian"), and our ascent route Devyaty Val ("Ninth Wave"), from the famous 1850 painting of the same name: 1,230m (1,885m of climbing), Russian 6B (ED 6c WI5 M6 A2, minimal aid).

After a day's rest we returned to the Fersmana, and on the 25th Russian, Sergey, and I made the

second ascent of the Polish Route (2009) on Granitsa (5,370m), while Dmitry and Vladimir made the first ascent of Pogranichnik ("Border Guard," 5,270m, 4A).

Dmitry Golovchenko, Russia

Images



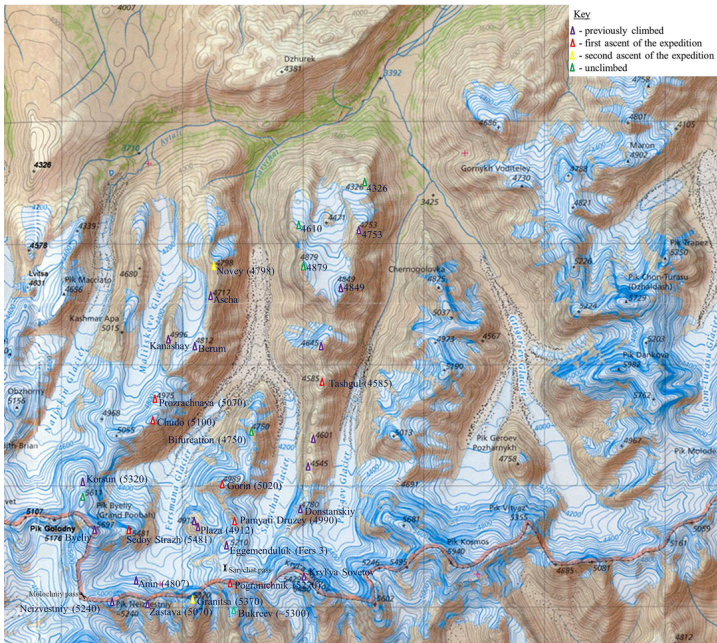
Looking southeast across the upper Fersmana Glaciers to routes climbed by the 2015 Russian expedition on Pogranichnik (left) and Granitsa, showing the Polish route (2009). In the middle is Pik ca 5,300m (labeled Bukreev on the 2015 team's map), which lies within China.



Looking from the ridge north of Korsun Peak to (A) Prozrachnaya and (B) Chudo. In the center, the Malitskogo Glacier flows north to the plains. Chudo was climbed from this point along the sharp ridge; Prozrachnaya from the Malitskogo Glacier, as marked. On the left is the prominent rock peak of Kashmar Apa.



Dmitry Golovchenko belays at the top of pitch 22 below the capping serac barrier of Ninth Wave, during the first ascent of Sedoy Strazh.



Map of the Fersmana and surrounding glaciers.



Sergey Nilov tackling a chimney on pitch six of Ninth Wave, the first route up Sedoy Strazh.



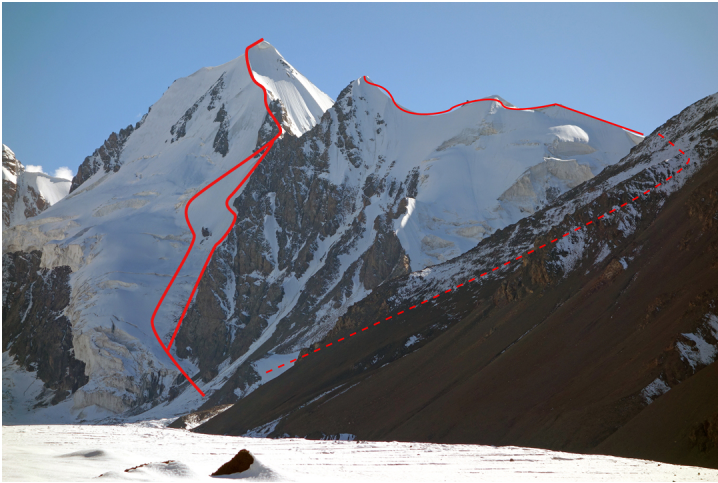
Sergey Nilov on pitch nine, a long corner system, during the first ascent of Ninth Wave, Sedoy Strazh.



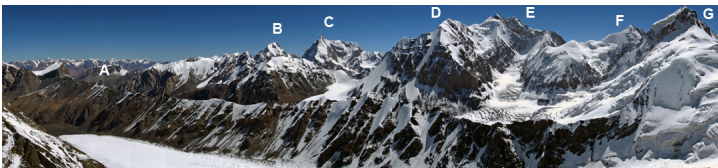
Seen from the east, Ninth Wave on Sedoy Strazh (a.k.a. Byeliy East, 5,481m) with the higher summit of Byeliy (5,697m) behind. The first-ascent party descended to the north and northwest, between Sedoy Strazh and Byeliy.



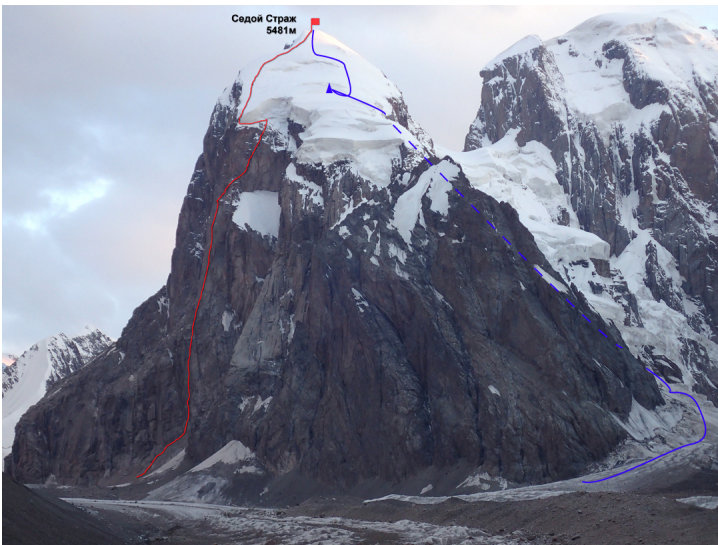
The valley leading toward Fersmana and Sarychat glaciers, showing Novey and the route of the 2015 Russian ascent.



Pamyati Druzey and route of ascent above the Sarychat Glacier. The higher snow peak behind is Eggemenduluk (a.k.a. Fers III, 5,210m) with the 2011 first-ascent routes marked.



A panorama of the peaks of the eastern sector of the Western Kokshaal-Too, looking northeast to east over the Sarychat Glacier. (A) Tashgul (4,585m). (B) Chonturasu (5,739m). (C) Dankova (5,962m). (D) Peak 5,681m. (E) Kosmos (5,940m). (F) Palgov (5,602m). (G) Krylya Sovetov (5,480m on maps or perhaps more likely 5,560m, as shown in Russian reports).



Sedoy Strazh (a.k.a. Byeliy East, 5,481m) from the Fersmana Glacier to the north. (1) Devjaty Val (2015). (2) Descent route, mostly hidden between Sedoy Strazh and Byeliy (5,697m) to the right.

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