



Lachit Valley: Goat Peak, Dream Walker Peak, "Ogre"

Pakistan, Karakoram, Tagas Group

Between August 18 and October 2, our expedition of four members of the Polish National Alpine Team, Maciej Bedrejcuk, Maciej Janczar, Marcin Wernik, and I, visited a previously unexplored region of the southern Tagas Mountains. We all knew each other well, having climbed together on many north faces of the Alps, and on winter routes in Tatra Mountains. Our goals were peaks in the Lachit Valley, north of the village of the same name in the lower Kondus Valley (35°15'33"N, 76°38'E), above Dansam. We were the first expedition to receive a permit to enter this valley, which rises toward the south side of K6, because the area is under military control. It was the third year I had tried to obtain this permit.

After an initial reconnaissance we established base camp at ca 4,000m in one of the western side valleys of the Lachit. During one month at or above base camp, we explored this and one other arm of the Lachit. Both side valleys were surrounded by beautiful ca 6,000m peaks. We took many pictures and aerial footage from a drone. We also managed to climb two virgin peaks

On August 27, we made an easy acclimatization ascent of a rocky summit, which we climbed from a ca 4,700m snowy col and named Goat Peak (4,991m, UIAA IV).

The second mountain was a real adventure, with an unplanned bivouac and an unexpected weather breakdown. We chose the soaring peak that we could see up and left from our base camp, and climbed it without bivouac equipment over two days.

On September 4, from an advanced base camp at ca 5,000m, sheltered by a serac, we crossed the glacier and simul-climbed the initial 300m of the north face. We were caught out in the dark and spent the night on a small ledge at 5,600m. Unfortunately, it snowed. Next day, with no improvement, we decided to continue. The first pitch that day was the crux of the route, a 1.5cm-thick, unprotected ice smear (AI5). We reached the summit ridge and continued to the top, which we gained at 3 p.m. Our descent followed the route, and needed 14 rappels from ice threads and pitons, plus some downclimbing. We eventually reached advance base in the middle of the night in continuous snowfall. We propose the name Dream Walker Peak (5,809m); our route is called Rolling (D)Ice (ca 1,450m of climbing, ED1/2 AI5 80° M5).

Our third goal was a mountain seen on the right from base camp, a large tower with airy ridges and a pointed summit, difficult on all sides—the great dream of every alpinist. Because of its character, we gave it a working name of the Ogre, and there was no doubt its summit would be the main objective of our expedition, and the essence of alpinism as we know it.

There was a promising ice couloir on the northeast face, which was easily accessible from base camp. We first made an advance base at 4,500m, below the ca 1,500m face, and then climbed the couloir in three days with two sitting bivouacs on snow ledges. On the third day, September 20, we reached a saddle on the ridge at 6,004m. Obviously we planned to keep going, but it was now 3:30 p.m. and the weather had turned bad. We estimated we would need a full day to get to the summit and return to the saddle. Given the forecast for continuing deterioration in the weather, this meant we would have to rappel our couloir in heavy snowfall, under the threat of avalanches. There was really no choice. We started to rappel immediately and late at night reached our first bivouac.

The following day we continued rappelling, reaching the glacier in the afternoon, after a total of 27 rappels from the saddle. At about 5:30 p.m. we arrived in base camp, and on the same night it began to snow heavily, continuing over the next couple of days. We did not see the mountains, but every few minutes could hear the roar of avalanches, fully convincing us that we had made a wise choice up there on the saddle. When the weather improved, we went back up to collect the tents and found them buried with snow, the poles broken. We called our route to the col the Polish Couloir (ED2 AI5 M7- 90°), but the Ogre remains unclimbed.

During our stay we saw many beautiful peaks awaiting first ascents, many a relatively short distance from Lachit village. The mountains here are alpine in character, and we believe the Lachit Valley will give future expeditions unforgettable mountain adventures.

Tomasz Klimczak, Poland

Images



The Polish Couloir on "Ogre."



Topo for Rolling D(Ice) on Dream Walker Peak (5,809m).



Dream Walker and "Ogre" under fresh snow.



Dream Walker Peak (partly visible left) and the Ogre from base camp.



Dream Walker Peak (left) with the line of Rolling (D)Ice mostly hidden, and Ogre on right with Polish Couloir marked. Base camp is toward the bottom right corner of this image.



Climbing fun ice gullies during the first ascent of Dream Walker Peak.



Traversing icefields on the first ascent of Dream Walker Peak.



Goat Peak, climbed at UIAA IV from the ca 4,700m col in the foreground.



Starting the crux pitch of the Polish Couloir, with the main difficulties at the top.



Steep ice climbing in the Polish Couloir.



Photo-topo of the Polish Couloir route on the "Ogre." The main summit is to the right.



The Polish Couloir from the next side valley north of base camp, with the main summit of the "Ogre" to the right.



Embarking on the start of the steep ice in the Polish Couloir.



Looking down the upper section of the Polish Couloir.

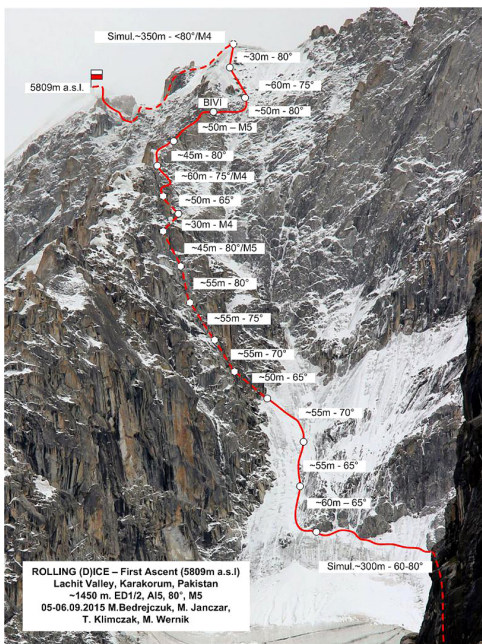


Photo-topo of Rolling D(Ice) on Dream Walker Peak.

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