



AAC Publications

Kyzyl Asker Glacier, Various Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Western Kokshaal-Too

Matjaz Cotar, Anze Jerse, Uros Stanonik, and I landed in Bishkek to find one of our rucksacks had not boarded the plane. After three days of waiting, we were left with no other option than to buy the missing gear and move on. Two days' driving and five days' load carrying saw us established in base camp at the foot of the Kyzyl Asker Glacier.

After an initial reconnaissance, Anze, Uros, and I bivouacked below Gronky (5,080m) and the next day, August 29, climbed a new ice line on the west face of Carnovsky (4,860m). It was not exactly the warm-up we wanted: Because of bad conditions, the line required nine hours of difficult and often dangerous climbing. We descended via Abalakov and rock spike anchors, and the next day returned to base camp, determined to shift our activity to ridges, as the snow and ice was so bad. We named the route Mr. Mojo Risin' (500m, V/5+ M5 R/X).

To aid our acclimatization, we started up the ridge forming the eastern rim of the glacier. It crosses the summits of Beggar (4,640m), Ecstasy (4,720m), Yurnos (4,720m), Gronky, Carnovsky, and Zuckermann (5,046m). The weather again took a turn for the worst, and we stopped to put up the tent between Ecstasy and Yurnos. There was no improvement next morning, so we descended west to the Kyzyl Asker Glacier, having achieved a goal of spending a night at almost 5,000m.

At the start of the next promising weather forecast, all four of us packed four days of food and headed for the west ridge of Kyzyl Asker (5,842m). A heavily crevassed area, and then deep fresh snow higher up, forced us to camp at ca 5,000m. Next day, September 7, we continued through more fresh snow toward the saddle at the foot of the west ridge. Here, we realized conditions were too bad to reach the main summit, so we left our sacks below the saddle and climbed the ridge southeast for ca 100m height gain (M4) as far as Kyzyl Asker West Shoulder (Pik 5,632m). [This summit was first climbed ca 1985 by Soviets via the ridge over Rock Horse and Raven Peak to the north-northwest; see AAJ 2011.]

We had just enough time left for one more climb, and we split into two teams. We'd had enough of heavy sacks filled with bivouac gear, so opted for a lightweight approach on climbs that we could do, more or less, in a day. Uros and I left at 11 p.m. on the 11th and spent the whole night approaching the northwest face of Panfilovski Division (5,290m). At daybreak we were horrified to see the seracs on the east face of Kyzyl Asker directly above us, so we started climbing away from them—fast. Above a lower rock barrier we found steep ice, which brought us to a snowfield. We moved right below a broken pillar, and then—a surprise!—an entire wall of concrete-hard névé. The sound of the tools squeaking could be heard half a pitch away.

There was a snow flurry half way through the afternoon, but we reached the top half an hour before dark, just in time to inspect the descent before being engulfed by clouds. We headed northeast down the slope toward the col between Zuckermann and Vernyi (4,850m). Fatigue increased with every hour; concentration dropped inversely. We got lost above seracs and had to double back, then finally reached the glacier above the icefall between Vernyi and Gronky. Here, we got completely lost. We'd been on the go for 24 hours, awake since the morning before we left base camp, and everything looked very different from the last time we were there. We first considered that we might be in the wrong valley, then that some natural disaster must have happened, before finally getting our dysfunctional brains under relative control and continuing with a nice four-hour walk, full of

hallucinations, back to base camp. We named our 900m route White Walker (V/5 M6). [Editor's note: The northwest face of Panfilovski Division was climbed in the summer of 1980 by Popenko and team to make the first ascent of the mountain. The new Slovenian route would appear to lie close by, but not identical, to this line, which was likely climbed as a rock route].

Meanwhile, Anze and Matjez had climbed a new route on the southwest face of Gronky. Their line, which followed obvious couloirs interspersed with icefalls and a few detours onto rock, was completed in a round trip of 14 hours from base camp: Take a Walk on the Wild Side (700m, V/4+ M6 6a).

Miha Hauptman, Slovenia

Images



Miha Hauptman running out of ice during the first ascent of White Walker, Panfilovksi Division.



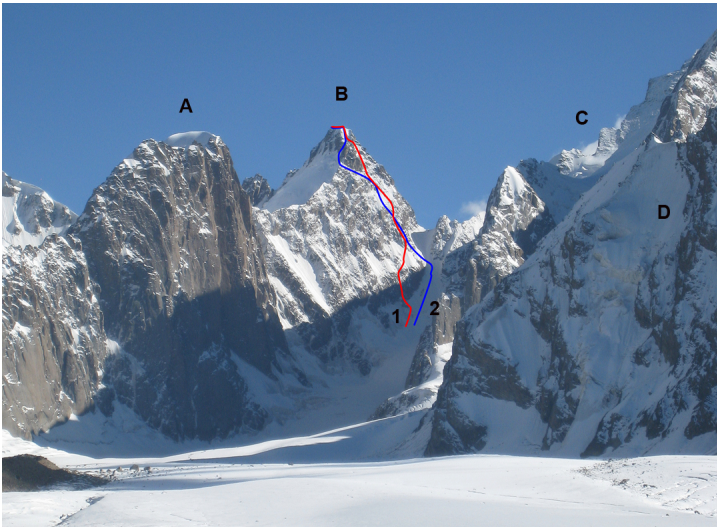
Uros Stanonik, belayed by Anze Jerse, leads poor-quality steep ice on the first ascent of Mr. Mojo Risin'.



Looking south up the Kyzyl Asker Glacier (east and west forks). Two of the routes climbed by Slovenians in 2015 are marked: (1) White Walker on Panfilovski Division. (2) The northeast slope and northwest ridge of Kyzyl Asker West Shoulder. This summit was originally climbed over the pointed triangular peak to the northwest (right), on the ridge forming the western rim of the glacier.



Mr. Mojo Risin' on the west face of Carnovsky.



Looking south up the east fork of the Kyzyl Asker Glacier. (A) Vernyi. (B) Panfilovski Division. (C) Northeast ridge of Kyzyl Asker. (D) Part of the north flank of Ljoshka (4,713m). (1) White Walker. (2) 1980 Popenko Route.



Anze Jerse climbing a rock section of Take a Walk on the Wild Side on the southwest face of Gronky.



Anze Jerse approaching Take a Walk on the Wild Side on the southwest face of Gronky.



Moving up the northwest ridge of the West Shoulder of Kyzyl Asker.

Article Details

Author	Miha Hauptman
Publication	AAJ
Volume	58
Issue	90
Page	284
Copyright Date	2016
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions