



AAC Publications

Korlomshe Tokpo, Kusyabla And Temple

India, Zaskar

In August I led a small team of Alpine Club members to the Korlomshe Tokpo, which had received only one known previous visit. In 2012, Kamikazu Sakamoto's non-climbing expedition entered this valley but ventured no higher than 5,100m to photograph peaks (AAJ 2013).

From Leh we made a two-day, boneshattering drive to Padam, via Kargil, and then continued by road for a short distance to just beyond Bardan Gompa. From there, a two-day trek took us to a 4,153m base camp close to the confluence of the Tamasa Nala and Korlomshe Tokpo. This site proved much lower than we had hoped, forcing us to make an advanced base below the Korlomshe Glacier at 5,130m.

From here, Drew Cook, Gus Morton, Knut Tønsberg, and I extensively explored the lower regions of the glacier to identify potential climbing objectives. On September 1, Cook, Morton, and I made the first ascent of Peak 5,916m (northwest of T10 and due east of T9 on the Sakamoto sketch map, AAJ 2013) via its glacial southeast ridge (AD). On the 4th, Tønsberg and our liaison officer, Malkeet Singh, followed the same route to the top. We called the peak Kusyabla (33°20.159'N, 76°47.747'E), the Ladakhi word for Monk.

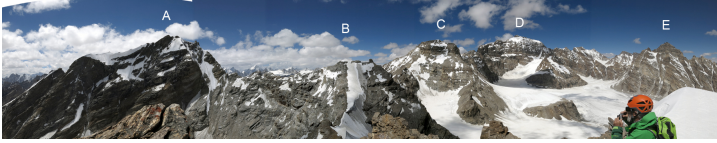
Following a reconnaissance of the upper Korlomshe Tokpo, a high camp was established on a glacial plateau at 5,500m. From this camp, Morton, Tønsberg, and I attempted the impressive Matterhorn-like peak close to the head of the valley. On September 8 we ascended a prominent southwest-facing ice ramp to reach the steep (50°), glaciated east face, which we climbed to just below the rocky south ridge at ca 5,900m (D). At this point, insufficient time – rather than technical difficulty – dictated a retreat.

On the 10th, and from the same high camp, Tønsberg and I climbed unroped up the glaciated east-northeast face and southeast ridge of Peak 5,947m (AD). This peak, which is situated northwest of Kusyabla and north-northeast of T9 (6,107m), was given the name Temple on account of a pulpit-like rock formation on the summit ridge.

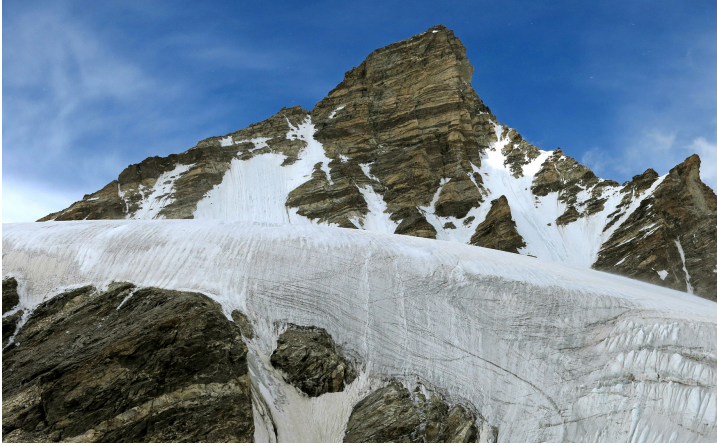
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Derek Buckle, U.K.

Images



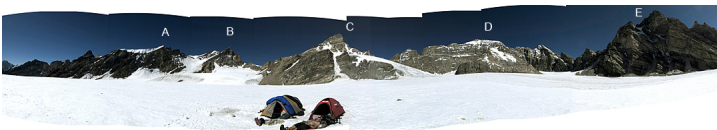
Panorama from Kusyabla showing (A) T9, (B) Temple, (C) Matterhorn Peak, (D) T13, and (E) T11.



The "Matterhorn" Peak from the east. The 2015 attempt climbed the narrowing snow slope in the center to just below the crest of the left skyline ridge at an indistinct notch.



Knut Tønberg on the final slopes of Temple, with Kusyabla behind.



The view west from high camp, showing (A) Kusyabla and (B) Temple, both climbed in 2015, and unclimbed peaks (C) "Matterhorn", (D) T13, and (E) T11.



Unclimbed T9 seen from Kusyabla to the east.

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