



AAC Publications

Gulmit Tower, Attempt; Pregar, South Face to Just Below Summit

Pakistan, Karakoram, Karun Koh Group

Looking north from Karun Pir (Pass) at an unnamed and probably unclimbed peak of around 6,000m (left) and Pregar, with the two routes attempted on its south face in 2016. Photo by Peter Thompson

Aiden Laffey (Ireland) and I hoped to make the first ascent of Gulmit Tower (5,810m), from the Bulkish Yaz Glacier, above Gulmit village in the Hunza Valley. [This tower in the Batura Muztagh had witnessed five previous attempts. See AAJ 2012.] On June 11, soon after our arrival, a large rockfall hit base camp. One rock came through my tent and hit me a glancing blow on the head. With no other suitable site for base camp, we decided to abandon the attempt.

Instead, we opted to attempt Pregar (6,200m; 6,112m on the Soviet map, 36.609876°N, 75.030574°E Google Earth) in the Moorkhun Valley. The trail is fairly easy, and with three porters we walked from Moorkhun village to base camp at 4,420m in one day.

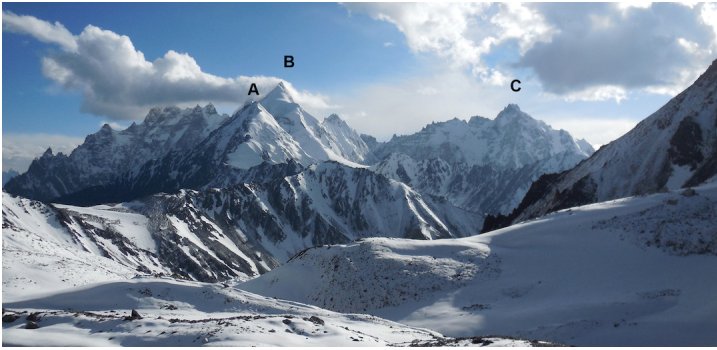
On June 23, after a period of acclimatization, we attempted the south face from an advanced base at 5,085m but were stopped at 5,500m by crevasses. On the 26th we made a second attempt by a different route farther right. Unfortunately, Aiden (who had the rope) took a different line and became separated from me by large crevasses. He waited in support at ca 5,700m while I continued solo on slopes up to 60° at alpine AD. A final steep section of sugary snow on top of hard ice felt insecure, and I retreated just 20m from the summit. I rejoined Aiden and we descended together. Back at base camp, with little food remaining, we called for our porters and went down.

We had thought we were attempting the first ascent of Pregar. However, the report of the Austrian expedition that did the first ascent of Karun Koh (6,977m) from the Moorkhun Valley in 1984 also stated they made "the first ascent of a 6,200m peak west of Karun Koh." I think this peak is probably Pregar, although our climb could be a new line.

Other reported climbs in this valley are the first ascent of Tupopdan in 1987, an attempt on the difficult Jurjur Khona Sar in 1988, the first ascent of Tapadan Sar in 1988 (all peaks a little above 6,000m), and two attempts on Zartgarbin (ca 5,850m), the last in 1997. All were made by British teams. In 2014, Phil De-Beger and Tim Oates attempted the south face of Pregar from a bivouac at 4,900m but met with bad snow conditions and retreated from 5,600m. Another interesting, unnamed peak is located between Tapadan Sar and Pregar. It looks to be around 6,000m and is probably unclimbed.

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Images



Looking southwest from below Pregar at (A) Zartgarbin, (B) Tupopdan, and (C) Jurjur Khona Sar.



Karun Koh (6,977m) and the southwest ridge, climbed on the first ascent in 1984.



Looking south from Pregar across the Shimshal Valley to, from left to right: Bularung Sar (7,134m, Swiss 1990, AAJ 1991); Dut Sar (6,858m, Italians 1993, AAJ 1995); and the long summit crest of Lupghar Sar (East, Central, and West—all summits around 7,200m, with the Central thought to be the highest. West first climbed in 1979 by Germans; West and Central climbed in 1979 by Japanese, AAJ 1980; East, Swiss 1987).



Looking north from the Karun Pir (Pass) at an unnamed, and probably unclimbed, peak of around 6,000m (left) and Pregar, with the two routes attempted on its south face.



The north-northwest face of Tupopdan (6,106m) seen from the Moorkhun Valley. The first ascent by a British team in 1987 (summit reached by Andy Cave and John Stevenson in alpine style) climbed the northeast ridge (left skyline) from the high col at its base, reached from the far side. Later in the year, an Austrian team repeated the ridge using 450m of fixed rope. The face is about 1,800m high.



Zartgarbin (ca 5,850m and thought to be still unclimbed) seen from the north, the face being around 800m in height.



Karakoram Beauties

Article Details

Author	Peter Thompson
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions