



AAC Publications

Darshaidara Valley, Imast, North-Northwest Ridge, and Other Climbs

Tajikistan, Pamir / Shakhdara Range

In July, five members of the Cracow Mountaineering Club visited the upper Darshaidara (Dara Darshai) Valley, located in the far west of the Shakhdara Range in the southwest Pamir. After two days of trekking from Darshai village in the Wakhan Corridor, Mirosław Burzyński, Daria Mamica-Gałka, Radosław Stawiarski, Monika Wałaszek, and I set up base camp at the Tung pastures (ca 4,200m). It is possible to hire donkeys in Darshai, each carrying around 45kg; due to steep, exposed sections of the trek, each donkey should be accompanied by a local guide.

It took us another two days to establish advanced base at 4,700m, located on the glacier moraine southwest of Pik Mayakovsky (Quilla Mayakovskiy, 6,096m, 37°1'16"N, 71°42'55"E), which we chose as our first goal. The approach to advanced base requires some tricky moraine and two or three river crossings that may be problematic in late summer.

After placing a high camp at 5,300m, Mirosław, Radosław, and I reached the southeast summit (6,059m) of Mayakovsky via the 1947 Burdenov Route (3A) on the south face. Due to total lack of visibility that day, we decided not to traverse to the main (northwest) summit. It was the only bad-weather day during our whole stay in the valley. (See AAJ 2012 for a report of another ascent on the south face.)

We then moved advanced base to the southern part of the upper Darshaidara Valley, at 4,750m on moraine between the Ambarku and Ganzekh glaciers, just below the northwest slopes of Pik Imast (5,954m). Imast is the third-highest peak in the valley, and we chose the north-northwest ridge. We placed a high camp at 5,000m on the glacier between Imast and Pik Akademika Berga (a.k.a. Qullai Khirskhabol, 6,094m). Next day, after a six-hour ascent, Mirosław, Radosław, and I reached the summit via this probable new route (long sections of 50° snow/ice with maximum angle of 70°). Just below the top we found a cairn; we believe ours was the second ascent of the peak. We descended the same way after enjoying an excellent and extensive panorama of the Hindu Kush from the top.

We chose Pik Kolgaspornyi (5,604m) as our last objective, and Mirosław, Radosław, and I reached the top via the east ridge (snow/ice to 60°), which we approached from the Ambarku Glacier. We descended the same way. We think this was the second ascent of the peak. We spotted day-old spoor, belonging to either snow leopard or Pamir bear, above 5,000m during this climb.

Although most of the peaks in this valley are climbed, there are still some likely untouched summits. One of the most interesting is Pik 5,722m, immediately southeast of Pik Mayakovsky. Its 500m icy north face might present a worthwhile climb. Further south is Pik 5,623m, which has a cat-like rocky summit and has probably never been attempted. According to our research, Pik 5,395m, the first summit southwest of Mayakovsky, and Pik 5,622m (possibly named Bashiya), farther south, are likely to be unclimbed as well. On the other side of the valley, Pik 5,593m, northeast of Akademika Berga, also has no reported ascent.

The previously climbed peaks in the valley are still interesting objectives. The second highest, Akademika Berga, is a technical mixed climb that probably has much loose rock. Piks Ambarku (5,778m) and Snezhnyi (Snowpeak, 5,836m), both located west of Imast, would provide great alpine adventures and probably have not been repeated since the 1950s.

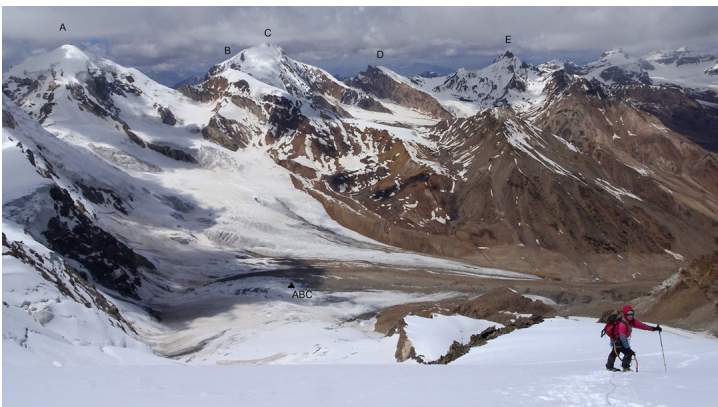
All names and heights are according to USSR maps J-42-108, J-42-120, and a sketch map by V. Lapin, 1993.

Jakub Gałka, Poland

Images



Akademika Berge (left) and Imast, seen from the east, are two dominant peaks of the upper Darshaidara Valley. The probable new route on Imast (Polish, 2016) is shown.



Looking west over the Ambarku Glacier from below the summit of Pik Imast. Advanced base camp (ABC) is marked, as is (A) Snezhnyi (5,836m), (B) Kolgasporny (5,604m), (C) Abharv (a.k.a. Kolbun, 5,864m, one recorded ascent), (D) Perevalnyi (5,514m, one recorded ascent), and (E) Pik Podnebesny (5,657m, also possibly only climbed once, at 3A).



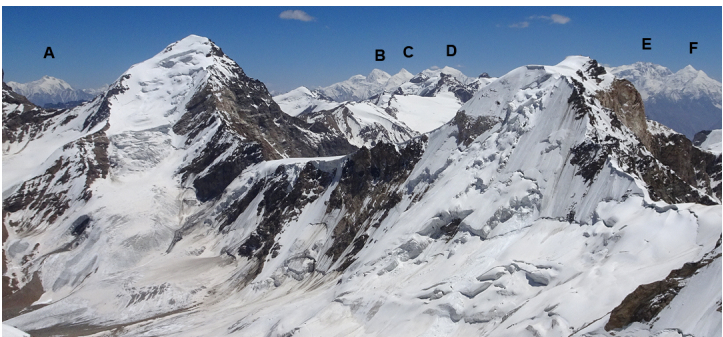
North face of Pik 5,722m seen from a high camp below the south face of Mayakovsky. This summit is probably unclimbed.



Seen from the southwest, Pik 5,722m (left) and the double-summitted Pik 5,623m.



The east face of Pik Abharv (a.k.a. Kolbun). This peak has only one known ascent, and as this is presumed to have followed one of the ridges, this face is likely unclimbed.



The northeast faces of Imast (left) and Ambarku, seen from Kolgasporni. In the background are some of the high peaks of the Afghan Hindu Kush: (A) Koh-e-Hevad, (B) Akher Chioch (Akher Chagh), (C) Koh-e-Tez, (D) Koh-e-Urgunt, (E) Saraghrar, and (F) Languta-e-Barfi.

Article Details

Author	Jakub Gałka, Poland
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions