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Pik Pobeda East, First Ski Descent

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan

IN THE SUMMER of 2010, after a ski descent from Shkhara **in the Georgian Caucasus**, Peter Schön traveled to the Tien Shan with Anders Ödman, hoping to make a ski descent of the north face of Pik Pobeda (7,439m). That objective proved too avalanche prone, so the pair opted to attempt a ski descent of the more remote Pik Pobeda East (6,762m).

They acclimatized by climbing Khan Tengri (6,995m) by the standard route from the south. Subsequently, their approach up the Zvezdochka Glacier toward Pobeda East took several days, and the pair witnessed frequent avalanches, the proportions of which they had never seen before or would see since. One huge avalanche, probably emanating around 6,500m, powdered them in their tent on the glacier at 4,800m.

After reaching the Chon-Toren (or Teren) Pass at 5,488m, they began a summit push up the 35° to 50°-plus northeast ridge of Pobeda East. Ödman eventually turned around 200m below the top, wanting to preserve a bit of energy for the descent. Schön continued alone, punching through crusty wind slabs and negotiating tiring unconsolidated snow over rock. Exhausted, he reached the summit at 2:30 p.m. The views were expansive, particularly into the vast Chinese Tien Shan and along the ridgeline to the main summit of Pobeda.

After taking photos, Schön made a lone ski descent of the beautiful ridge: steep, exposed, and above a remote desert of ice and snow.

– Lindsay Griffin, with information from Peter Schön

Images



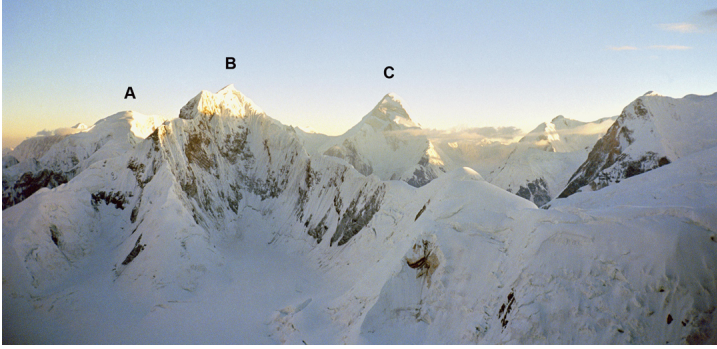
Peter Schön ascending the Zvezdochka Glacier toward Chon-Toren Pass (on the right). To the left and behind the pass is the large bulk of Pik Voenna Topografi (6,873m). The northeast ridge of Pobeda East rises up to the right from the pass.



Avalanche above the Zvezdochka Glacier. Anders Ödman and Peter Schön witnessed larger avalanches on this trip than they had seen before or have seen since.



Looking down toward Chon-Toren Pass (5,488m) during the first ski descent of the northeast ridge of Pobeda East.



Looking north just after dawn during the ascent of Pobeda East. (A) Ak-tau (6,181m). (B) Pik 6,201m. (C) Khan Tengri (6,995m).



Anders Ödman climbing the northeast ridge of Pobeda East (6,762m) above Chon-Toren Pass before executing a ski descent.



The main summit of Pik Pobeda (7,439m) seen along the frontier ridge from Pobeda East.



The southwest ridge of Pik Voenna Topografi (6,873m), rising above Chon-Toren Pass opposite Pik Pobeda East.

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