



Hasho Peak II, West Flank and South-southeast Ridge; Tangra Tower, Southeast Face; The Thumb South Peak, Southeast Couloir and Southwest Ridge

Pakistan, Karakoram, Tagas Group, Khane Valley

Matyushin Nikolai on the southeast face of Tangra Tower, with peaks on the south side of Khane Valley behind. Photo by: Konstantin Markevich

In mid-July, the Russian team of Anton Ivanov, Konstantin Markevich, Nikolai Matyushin, Marina Popova, Denis Prokofiev, Valery Semenov, and Denis Sushko, a mix of climbers from Krasnoyarsk and Moscow, arrived in the Khane Valley, establishing base camp south of Tangra Tower at around 4,450m.

At first the whole team planned to make the first ascent of the remote Hasho Peak II (6,080m, 35°20'42.28"N, 76°29'24.38"E), the highest peak in the valley, at the northern head of the Khane Glacier. Using this for acclimatization, they then planned to attempt lower technical climbs. However, once the three Krasnoyarsk climbers—Matyushin, Popova, and Prokofiev—saw their main goal, the unclimbed southeast face of Tangra Tower, they decided to get straight on it.

The others headed up the Khane Glacier for Hasho Peak II, the approach to which took two days. There is a difficult icefall to negotiate, and during acclimatization and reconnaissance the party outflanked this on a rock buttress, where they climbed difficulties up to 6b and A3, and fixed 100m of rope. They made camp on the upper glacier plateau at around 5,400m. From there, on July 23, Ivanov, Markevich, and Sushko climbed snow slopes of 50–60° on the west flank of the mountain to reach the south-southeast ridge, which they followed to the summit. The ascent from camp took four and a half hours and, overall, the route was rated 5A. [The team proposed to rename this summit Ilford Peak in honor of one of the photography company and its black and white films, which the climbers have used on all their expeditions.]

The 25-pitch Krasnoyarsk Route on the southeast face of Tangra Tower.

After this there was a spell of poor weather and Ivanov went home. It wasn't until August 5 that Markevich, Semenov, and Sushko achieved their second objective, the first ascent of the south peak (5,780m) of the Thumb. (The main summit of the Thumb is 5,811m). The three climbed the southeast couloir (50–60° snow) to reach a col on the southwest ridge at 5,550m. From there, seven long pitches of rock and mixed on the steep crest led to the summit. This section was climbed free at 6b+ and M6, and the overall grade of the 640m route was Russian 5B.

In the meantime, the Krasnoyarsk team had made the first ascent of Tangra Tower (5,820m), arriving on the summit August 2. Matyushin, Popova, and Prokofiev started to the right of the line attempted by a British-Canadian team (AAJ 2016), crossed through it, then climbed well left of the large central corner in the center of the face. (This corner was followed to about half height by the British-Canadian team before they retreated.)

The three Russians climbed the 800m-high wall (1,200m of climbing) in three days, with a further day needed for the descent via their line. They used a portaledge for bivouacs, hauling the ledge to a new site each day as they moved continuously up the wall. The first day, they climbed nine pitches and bivouacked at about 5,400m, alongside a convenient snow patch for water. The climbing now became vertical, and for this reason much better protected from rockfall. That night the portaledge was set

under a roof at around 5,600m. The next day they reached the top, the last two pitches along the summit ridge being something of a trial, with deep loose snow (often to the waist or more) and even looser rock, which resulted in a fall onto a ledge, fortunately with only bad bruising. The difficulties had been sustained: 25 pitches, overall 6B, 6c+/7a A4. The team considers the wall to be the most attractive and longest in the area.

– Information provided by **Konstantin Markevich**, Russia

Images



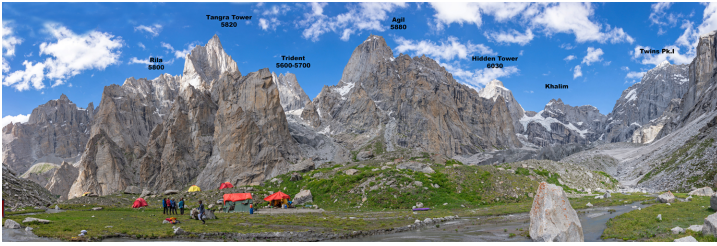
The Krasnoyarsk team (left to right): Marina Popova, Denis Prokofiev, Nikolai Matyushin, below the southeast face of Tangra Tower. (1) Krasnoyarsk Route. (2) Fisher-Monypenny attempt.



Matyushin Nikolai on the southeast face of Tangra Tower, with peaks on the south side of Khane Valley behind.



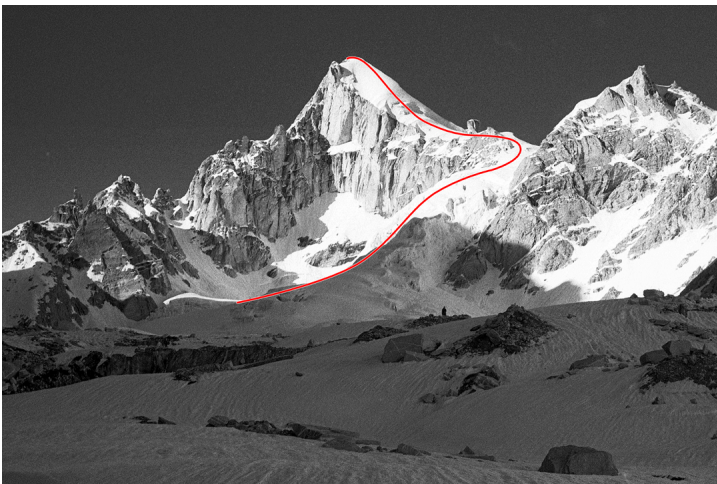
Climbing a corner system on the southeast face of Tangra Tower.



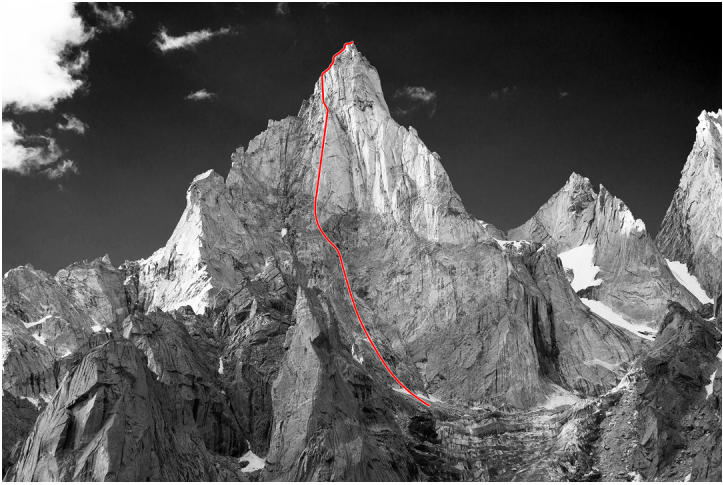
Looking northeast from base camp below the Khane Glacier. Note that the original name for the peaks labeled Trident is the Thumb.



Denis Prokofiev on the southeast face of Tangra Tower, seen from the steep middle section of the route. Below is the small glacier of the Second Khane Cwm, while the main Khane Valley is visible top left.



The west flank and south-southeast ridge of Hasho Peak II, the highest summit in the Khane Valley. The Russian first ascensionists propose to rename this Ilford Peak.



The Krasnoyarsk Route on the southeast face of Tangra Tower.



The Russian first ascent route (southeast couloir and southeast ridge) to the south summit of the Thumb.



Denis Sushko on the last pitch before the summit of the south peak of the Thumb during the first ascent.



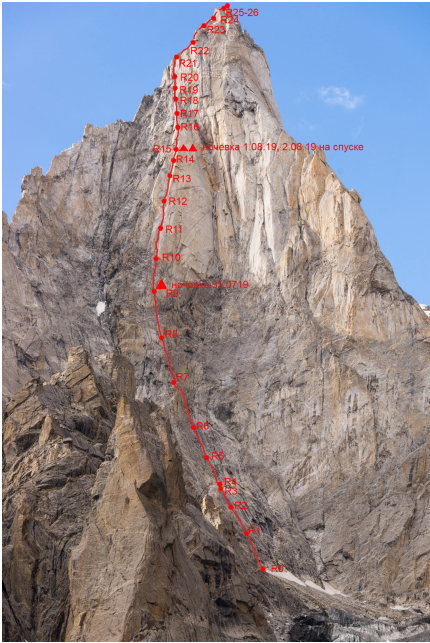
On the upper southwest ridge during the first ascent of the south peak of the Thumb.



Looking down the corner system climbed on the second day during the Russian ascent of the southeast face of Tangra Tower.



In the southeast couloir of the Thumb.



The 25-pitch Krasnoyarsk Route on the southeast face of Tangra Tower.

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