



AAC Publications

Kayindy Valley, Three First Ascents

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan

On the Merzbacher Glacier, with Pik Oskal on the left and unclimbed Peak 5,061m on the right. **In August and September, we (Joris Korevaar and Arjen Pieters) traveled to the lower Kayindy (Kaindy) River valley and made three probable first ascents and one attempt.** The Kayindy is one valley south of the very large South Inylchek (Engilchek) Glacier.

The Kayindy has been explored by a number of expeditions over the years, with the first Western team arriving in 1995. Most of the summits that have been reached are located toward the upper (east) end of the valley. We decided to explore some mountains farther west.

We took a 4WD from Inylchek to a settlement at about 2,720m in the Kayindy Valley, where we were able to arrange for a horseman and three horses (this felt like a lucky break) to carry gear to our base camp at 3,200m at the base of the main glacier. This was about a 10-hour walk. The same horseman picked us up—one day late—at the end of expedition.

For our first climb, we placed a high camp at 4,100m alongside a glacier running up to the south from the main valley, which we called the Schuur Glacier after our weather guru back home. On August 20, we departed this camp and climbed 600m, keeping mostly to the left side of the glacier, to reach the col at its head. From here, we climbed the east ridge of a summit marked 5,449m on the Russian map (42°00'39.0"N, 79°37'00.9"E), mostly on steep snow with a few icy patches. During the last 200m we were surprised by some ups and downs in the ridge, but at 8:30 a.m. we reached summit, which we measured at 5,360m on our GPS watch. We called the mountain Pik Nooter, named after a climbing mentor, and graded our route AD. We descended the way we came.

We started our next attempt on August 22 from a high camp at 4,050m below an unclimbed peak (42°05'55.1"N, 79°34'33.5"E) on the north side of the Kayindy Valley. We started up the southeast face but retreated because of avalanche danger. Before heading back to base camp, we inspected the south face for a later attempt.

On August 30 at 2 a.m., starting from the same high camp, we climbed the steeper south face, finding extraordinary 50–60° ice, for which we roped up on the last 100m. We reached the west ridge at 4,600m and continued up through deep, soft snow. We summited at 9 a.m. and descended the same way, rappelling the south face using Abalakov anchors. We called the mountain In Libido Veritas VI (5,030m GPS) and graded our route D.

We also made an attempt on Peak 5,061m (42°02'04.0"N, 79°34'57.7"E), starting from the Merzbacher Glacier, one valley to the east of the Schuur Glacier. The Irish QUBMC expedition had attempted this mountain in 2016 three times but failed because of poor conditions and steep seracs on the east ridge. We had more or less the same plan, and from a high camp at 4,100m on the glacier we climbed to 4,900m, just below a steep serac, where the snow conditions became very poor. With limited options for belaying, we decided to turn around.

For our final climb of the expedition, we headed west from base camp toward a peak marked 4,669m on the old Russian map, located on the south side of the valley (42°01'13.3"N, 79°29'28.5"E). The climbing was mostly boring deep snow in beautiful scenery until the last 50m, where steeper ice and a

few meters of loose rock made things a bit more spicy. We descended the same way after completing the first known ascent of Punta Margarita (4,590m GPS, AD).

– **Arjen Pieters, Netherlands**

The map below labels known climbed and unclimbed peaks in the Kayindy Valley.

Images



Joris Korevaar below In Libido Veritas VI (5,030m GPS), showing the first ascent up the south face and west ridge.



On the Merzbacher Glacier, with Pik Oskal on the left and unclimbed Peak 5,061m on the right.



On the west ridge of In Libido Veritas VI during the first ascent.



View from the top of Pik Nooter, looking eastward across the Schurr Glacier toward Khan Tengri in the far distance.



Climbing Punta Margarita.



Nearing the summit of Punta Margarita.



On the south face of In Libido Veritas VI.



Looking up unclimbed Peak 5,061m during the attempt on the east ridge.

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