



Peak 5,925m, South Ridge

Pakistan, Karakoram, Panmah Muztagh

Looking southwest from the north cwm of the Sim Gang Glacier. The snowy summit in distant left is Peak 5,925m, climbed in 2022. Photo by Murilo Lessa

Once upon a time in a far-away corner of Pakistan, Philip De-Berger and I made the first complete ascent of Peak 5,925m (36.031132°N, 75.693247°E) above the Sim Gang Glacier.

With Peter Thompson, we arrived in Askole on June 18, 2022, started our approach in late morning the following day, and the day after reached Baintha on the Biafo Glacier. There we rested for two days, sitting out poor weather. On our fifth trekking day, a sudden turn in the weather stopped us an hour short of Karpogoro. It became obvious that the porters and mules would no longer take us further than Karpogoro, still 16km from base camp and 26km from our planned advanced base below our primary objective, unclimbed Virjerab Sar (6,601m, 36.070169°N, 75.726702°E). Due to the long hikes and heavy loads that would ensue, Peter concluded he would hold us back. He decided to leave the expedition but encouraged us to continue. We reached Karpogoro (35.951807°N, 75.630811°E) the same day, then waited a further day for the porters to deliver our equipment.

On the 27th, with food for seven days and packs weighing over 30kg, we set out for our planned advanced base below Virjerab Sar. Soft snow and intense heat made snowshoes essential. On the 29th, after reaching our proposed campsite in the north cwm of the Sim Gang Glacier, we attempted to access the Virjerab Col (ca 5,900m) between Virjerab Sar and Peak 6,443m. After several hours it became obvious the glacier was too broken and snow bridges too fragile for us to reach the slope leading to the col. The following day we tried again, this time toward the col on the south ridge of Virjerab Sar. The result was the same. Because of the heat we made 11 p.m. starts and climbed through the night, so navigating crevasses took considerable time and our window for doing so was short. By 10 a.m. we would be sitting in our tents, with the temperature inside at 30°C for much of the day.

Believing Peak 5,925m to the south was unclimbed, we repositioned our camp 6km down-glacier at the entrance to the basin south of the mountain. At midnight on July 1, we left for the summit. The thermometer registered 14°C! Using snowshoes, we ascended the basin to the northwest and then up to a southwest-facing ridge. Here, we changed into crampons and simul-climbed up the ridge until it joined the south ridge of Peak 5,925m. We followed this to the top, where my GPS recorded an altitude of 5,905m. On July 3 we were back at Karpogoro base camp and on the 5th started our return to Askole.

In both 2008 and 2011, Pierre Neyret climbed more or less this same route but stopped at a shoulder, which he called Dom Brakk (5,880m), where the southwest ridge meets the south ridge, at least half a kilometer from the main summit (AAJ 2012).

— Murilo Lessa, U.K.

Images



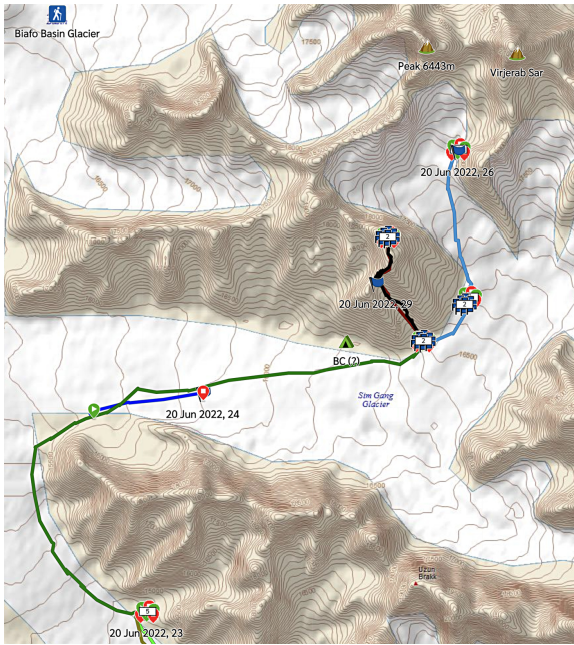
A heavily loaded Murilo Lessa approaching Virjerab Sar (the high peak in distant left). Virjerab Col is to the left.



Looking southwest from the north cwm of the Sim Gang Glacier. The snowy summit in distant left is Peak 5,925m, climbed in 2022.



Advanced base camp in the north cwm of the Sim Gang Glacier, with Peak 6,433m (left) and Virjerab Sar in back. The Virjerab Col lies between the two peaks, and the other col attempted in 2022 is visible on the south ridge of Virjerab Sar to the far right.



Map of the Sim Gang Glacier with the 2022 route tracked.

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