



AAC Publications

Oroy Valley: Dragon Peak, First Ascent; Wolf Peak and Perseverance Peak, New Routes

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Kuilu Range

Felix Hatzold, Annick Pietzonka, and I entered the Kuilu Valley on July 27 in a truck with the driver blasting Russian rap music. After a bumpy all-day drive from Karakol, we had an exciting crossing of the Kuilu River, which placed us very close to the start of the Oroy Valley. This point became our base camp (42.1675730N, 78.858877E). We then made two gear carries up the valley to a site at around 3,800m where we made advanced base camp.

South of here, Perseverance Peak (4,788m, 42.095989N, 78.836069E) caught our eye. It was first climbed in 2021 from the Bordlu Glacier on its west side, by a team from the U.K. On July 31, we set off up the Oroy Glacier and attempted to reach the east ridge. However, we turned around just short of a sub-peak because of loose rock.

During the next week, we turned our attention to a peak west of ABC and north of Perseverance: Wolf Peak (4,631m), which had been climbed in 2018 by the northwest ridge. On August 8, we climbed the northeast ridge, turning many rock towers on the left side and finding lots of loose scree. We graded the route PD+.

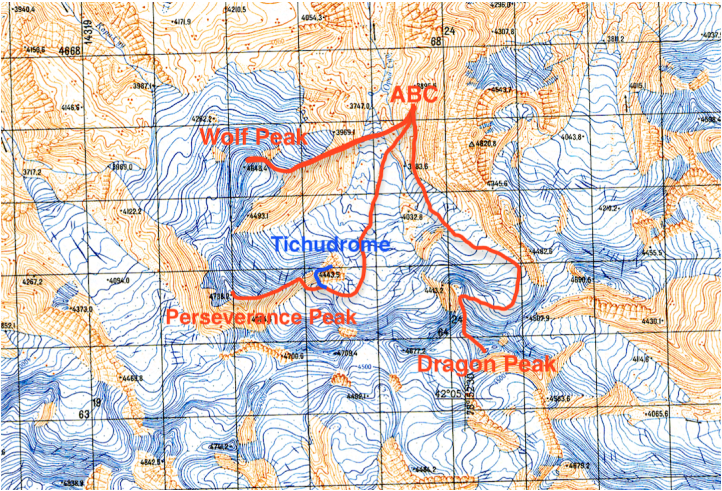
We returned to Perseverance Peak the next day, August 9, finding the climbing easier and much faster by going farther west on the slope up to the east ridge. We then followed the beautiful ridge either on rock (left side) or snow (right side). The crux was around 80m of 50° ice/snow, where two tools came in handy. Upon finishing this section, I assured Felix and Annick, waiting below, that the last 300m looked doable. They were scandalized that there was such a long way to go, but I'd been joking—we were on top in about 30m. We graded our new route up the east ridge AD 50°.

Our main objective was a higher peak, farther south up the Oroy Glacier. After one prior attempt, we departed ABC at 3 a.m. on August 10 under a sky full of shooting stars. After an hour on the bare glacier, we reached the first crux, a labyrinth of crevasses, some requiring belayed jumps across. Beyond this, we climbed the right side of a snow slope that rises to a col in the north ridge at 4,510m, reaching it as the sun rose. We followed the ridge to the top, belaying the steepest sections.

We graded the route AD with 50° ice and snow, and named the mountain Dragon Peak (4,820m, 42.090203N, 78.877262E), due to the scaly look of the glacier and some outrageously spicy soup we had eaten the day before. [A full expedition report with many photos and logistical information can be [downloaded here.](#)]

— Sebastian Kogreiss, Switzerland

Images



Map of the activities of the 2023 expedition to the Kuilu Range.



Dragon Peak from the northwest, showing the line of the first ascent.

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