

## Karakoram 1984

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If numbers of activists or expeditions are the major criterion, the upper Baltoro Glacier region was the centre of efforts and the theatre of some outstanding achievements. Fifteen out of the 59 expeditions to the Karakoram climbed there successfully, and 13 failed (figures are complicated by expeditions with more than one objective). Parties were active on K2, Broad Peak, the Gasherbrums, Chogolisa and K7, and on the steep towers of the lower Baltoro.

The centre of attraction was Broad Peak, especially when K2 turned its familiar cold shoulder to a 30-person International Expedition led by Stefan Wörner. Six expeditions put climbers on top. Notable was Kurt Diemberger's repeat ascent with Julie Tullis, 27 years after his first ascent with Hermann Buhl, and their close shave in a 150m avalanche during the descent. Even more remarkable were the Polish doings on the mountain. While his companions ascended more conventionally, and after a visit to 7400m for acclimatization, Krzysztof Wielicki (34), one of the two Poles who made the first winter ascent of Everest in February 1980, climbed Broad Peak from Base Camp and returned to Base Camp in less than 24 hours on 14 July. He already knew the route, there were camps on the mountain, his companions had made a trail and were on the mountain, but it remains a major physical and psychological feat. More innovative, and novel in an exploratory sense, was the traverse of Broad Peak by Voytek Kurtyka and Jerzy Kukuczka between 13 and 17 July. They made a major first ascent via the north, middle and main peaks before descending by the original W face route, thereby creating the second route to the summit. The climb involved great commitment and a long period close to 8000m as well as technical climbing. After soloing most of it and four bivouacs they reached the top on 17 July. During the descent Kurtyka fell when an old fixed rope failed, but managed to stop. They reached Base Camp next day. Among ascents of the W face original route, that by Bernard Moreau, Denis Chatefod, Jean Jacques and Martina Roland was notable, the latter being the second French husband and wife team to succeed following the Barrards in 1983.

In June Reinhold Messner and Hans Kammerlander made an innovative traverse of Gasherbrums 2 and 1. They ascended Gasherbrum 2 by the Moravec Route, descended by the ice fall between the Polish and French routes and ascended to the Gasherbrum La (6600m) before climbing the N face of Gasherbrum 1 and descending from its summit by the SW spur. This ascent was made in similar alpine style to the traverse of Broad Peak by the Poles and completed between 23 and 30 June. Two French parties were also successful on Gasherbrum 2 but a Spanish Expedition to this supposedly easiest of the 8000m peaks failed. Other failures occurred on Broad Peak (1), Gasherbrum (2) and Hidden Peak (1).

Elsewhere on the Baltoro there were mixed fortunes. The 30-member K2

Expedition on the Abruzzi Ridge met bad weather in June and early July. Peter Habeler and Stephane Schaffter co-operated with the four Polish women Anna Czerwińska, Krystyna Polmowska, Wanda Rutkiewicz and Dobrosława Wolf setting up their Camp 3 at 7350m on 25 June a month after Camp 1 at 6100m. A summit attempt between the 11 and 13 July was unsuccessful because of bad weather and its continuation seems to have prevented further action so that some members (Diemberger, Tullis, Habeler and Schaffter) transferred their attention elsewhere. Meanwhile a French party led by Christian Blot was successful on the SW spur of Chogolisa and a Tokyo University party led by Junji Nakarwa (60) and climbing leader Tochire Noejata (25) made the first ascent of K7 from the Charakusa glacier. They climbed the SW pillar using five camps, three climbers reaching the top on 8 August and three more on the 9th.

There was considerable action further down the Baltoro. A Spanish attempt on Pajju Peak failed, as did Scott Woolm's American attempt on Uli Biaho Spire. The latter then went on to make a new route in alpine style on the Central Trango Tower; meanwhile the able big wall climbers Hans Christian Doseh and Finn Doehli (Norway) did a 1800m major route on the SE wall of the Trango Tower. They were seen on top on 5 August, but fell to their deaths during the descent. On the Nameless Tower, the UK Bolton Expedition led by David Lampard made a technically difficult route left of the British 1976 route and appear to have reached easy ground before being driven back by bad weather without reaching the summit. The Doseh Route and the Lukpilla Spire route (see below) join the promising new generation of steep big wall climbs which are slowly materializing. On the Mustagh Tower, Mal Duff, Tony Brindle, Jon Tinker and Sandy Allen were on more traditional ground repeating the British W route of 1956 on two consecutive days at the end of July.

The Biafo Glacier area saw little action. A Polish expedition approached Latok 3 in May, but were immobilized it seems by the same heavy snow as hit K2. In contrast, Rob Milne, Galen Rowell, Jack Tackle and Graham Thompson (USA) climbed a fine new rock route on the Lukpilla Tower. Its Dru-like W face was climbed free by a 1050m granite wall in EB's, T-shirts and good weather, at grade VI, 5.10, finishing on 2 June. Other members of their party confounded sceptics by canoeing first the Braldu River from the Baltoro to the Indus at Skardu (Dr Andrew Embick, Rob Lesser, Bob McDougall, Bo Shelby and Kathy Blau) and then the Shyok River (Embick, solo) and the Hunza from Karimabad to Gilgit. Thereby they realized the aims of Dr. Mike Jones who died in an accident in 1978.

Hunza region was also a centre of much activity. There was some competition in attempts at Bojohagur Dian Asir (7329m, Ultar), a formidable peak close to Hunza and long out of bounds. Tony Saunders, Mick Fowler and friends tried a new route on the SE face alpine style and after some tribulations reached the ridge and ascended to close to 7000m. Meanwhile an 11-man Japanese party also reached the ridge from the Hasinabad Glacier. This Hiroshima Sangakukai group led by Tsuneo Omae had fixed ropes and camps and eventually reached the top on 28 July. Another Japanese group from Osaka University climbed Sanglemarmar (6949m) and Steve Roberts and Steve Pymm supported by Geoff Robinson, Phil Duffy and Martin Bunegar made the first ascent of Seiri Porkush (6872m) on the

Batura Glacier. An early season attempt on Karun Koh by Chris Bonington, Al Rouse and Pakistani climbers was unsuccessful, but 4 Austrians led by Harry Grun were later able to make the first ascent. Areas which have been restricted still offer first ascent possibilities for those willing to do a little homework. The difficulty of these peaks should not be underestimated, for many of the 5800m to 6900m peaks of the Karakoram are formidable challenges of rock and mixed climbing with much objective danger.

East of Hunza, Yukshin Garden Sar (7500m) was repeated three times, by two Japanese and one Austrian party. One of these, led by Hiroshi Tateoka, also tried Yutmaru Sar (7253m) but was unsuccessful. Jan Bongenaar's Dutch expedition to Spantik SE ridge succeeded, but a French attempt on Minapin by the NE ridge failed.

Rakaposhi and Nanga Parbat maintained their serious reputations. Rakaposhi repelled a Czech team of six, and also nearly defeated the Canadian expedition which abandoned plans for a N face direct route because of serac danger and tried instead to make a semi alpine style ascent (without fixed ropes) of the 1979 Japanese spur on the N face. Kevin Doyle, Barry Blanchard and Gregg Cronn made a summit attempt in early July which failed in bad weather, and Doyle had a close call when he was swept some distance in an avalanche and had his rucsac snatched from his back. After a three day retreat they abandoned their attempt and descended to the roadhead. On 11 July good weather persuaded Cheesmond, Doyle and Blanchard to return and they reclimbed the route in six days, making the fifth ascent of the mountain.

Eight expeditions tried Nanga Parbat, three succeeded, two by the Diamir face and one by the Rupal face. On 3 June the 46 year old Swiss, Marcel Rudei, reached the top alone by the Diamir face, his fifth 8000m peak in a year, after a spring ascent of Dhaulagiri and three 8000m summits in the Gasherbrums in 1983. Liliane and Maurice Barrard reached the top by the Diamir face on 27 June and a Spanish (Tarragona) expedition led by Jordi Magrina Guell succeeded on the Rupal face. Others were less fortunate. On 6 July four Japanese climbers from the Himalayan Club of Japan were avalanched and killed at Camp 3 (6700m) on the Rupal face, in an accident reminiscent of the German attempts of the 1930s. Tsuneo Hasegawa (36), who first soloed the Walker Spur in winter, tried the Austrian route on the Diamir face in the summer season without success and returned to attempt to solo the Rupal face in the Autumn. He climbed very high (7600m) during October and November but eventually retreated in what appears to be the first serious attempt at near winter climbing in the Karakoram.

Only a few parties ventured to the Pakistan Hindu Kush. The Durham and Oundle School party led by Jonathan Lee climbed Gul Lash Zom (6611m) but did not succeed on Tirich Mir. An Italian party traversed Bindu Gul Zom (6214m). The party first climbed the N ridge from a Base Camp on the lower Tirich Glacier, fixing ropes and encountering technically difficult climbing on 27 to 29 July. After returning to base they reascended this section on 31 July, and continued over several subsidiary summits, reaching the top on 3 August. They descended the 2000m E wall in 30 rappels, with one further bivouac.

Elsewhere in the Karakoram a few parties used the trekking regulations to climb on peaks under 6000m with the minimum of formalities, delay and

expense. In the Silkiang glacier area near Minapin, Lindsay Griffin soloed six smaller mountains by routes of around alpine D standard, sometimes accompanied by Jan Solov. Dick Renshaw and Stephen Venables seem to have been similarly active further west. For those of exploratory and innovative tendencies, and perhaps shortness of time and money, this is a promising development. The regulations have been much streamlined, and possible objectives are outstanding in some areas, as the Lukpilla Spire and, in a different mode, Griffin's ascents readily demonstrate. Of concern are the political troubles on the Afghan and Indian borders. These led to some changes in expedition objectives in 1984. One can only hope that caution and diplomacy prevail for the good of the peoples concerned and in the hope of avoiding the extreme restrictions which border problems have engendered in this region in the past.

