

2012 Expedition to Komorova Glacier of Western Kokshaal-Too

Participants: Michael Clifford (Ireland), Judith Schlapbach (Switzerland)

When: August 23rd to September 10th

We established our base camp on August 23rd within a half hour's hike from the foot of the Komorova Glacier (N 41deg 07'54.0, E 077deg 23'36.4). Advanced Base Camp was established on August 24th on the Eastern Flank of the central glacier below point 4863 (N 41deg 05'33.9, E 077deg 23'47.9, 4144m). Over the following 2.5 weeks we successfully climbed three peaks from five attempts.

Success 1: (N 41deg 03'21.9, E 077deg 23'42.7, 4926m, 30 August 2012) With reference to the American Alpine Club map, there is an unmarked summit located between points 4863 and 5046 that are on the dividing mountain chain between the eastern and central glacier. Our route took a ridge on the south side of the mountain (see photo). The start of the route is located approximately 50m below the western side of the pass on the North side of point 5046. It begins in a short chimney (5m) of loose rock before gaining the ridge on the right.

The ridge is of very nice and solid golden granite. At about half height, the ridge stops at a platform and there is a gully (~ca 50 deg snow/ice) directly in front for about 60m. After this, one can regain the ridge on the left and continue to the summit ridge. We would grade the ridge at AD-. We descended via the glacier on the North side of the summit. If we have permission to name the mountain we would like to name it Pik opT (Kyrgyz Cyrillic for Peak Fire).

Success 2: (Pik Beggar, September 4th, 2012) The obvious approach walk gaining the northern ridge from the western Komorova Glacier. Difficulty: Facile

Success 3: (Peak 4863, September 7th, 2012). This mountain is located on the dividing mountain chain between the eastern and central glacier. We climbed and descended the North ridge. Again, a very nice route taking an obvious line. We climbed it in difficult snow conditions but would rate the route at D-. Upon reaching the summit, we found abseiling cord around a block. It seemed to be one or two seasons old.

Pik 5046: We attempted this mountain on August 28th via the col on the Northern Side. Shortly after the col, we decided to turn around due to slab avalanche risk. The ascent to the summit looked straight forward and we would grade the route Facile.

Pik Babushka: On August 31st, we established a high camp on the western glacier (N 41deg 02'45.2, E 077deg 22'20.4) and on the morning of September we attempted Pik Babushka via an obvious couloir on the south west side. We reached an altitude of 5220m (N 41deg 01'51.3, E 077deg 22'38.6) before turning around due to strong winds on the ridge. We estimate that the route would be graded approximately AD.

General comments:

Base Camp: Access to base-camp was relatively straight forward with no serious off-road obstacles. Fresh water could be retrieved from a small stream 5 minutes from base camp on the north eastern side of river plain.

Advanced Base Camp: Crossing the river that comes from the Komorova Glacier was only possible in the morning unless you wanted to get wet. The Glacier had streams making the melting of snow/ice not necessary.

Komorova Glacier: While the tip of the glacier is dry with few/no crevasses, towards the back of the glacier, hidden crevasses span the entire glacier. As a result, we found it difficult to access the back of the glacier and one occasion, Judith unexpectedly fell into a crevasse.

Weather: The prevailing weather systems came from the south west and were hard to predict. It was quite mixed though we are happy with our timing.