



The Peak Names

Peak #1, Temasek Peak
4374m

N 42° 19.42' E 80° 3.589'

The first virgin peak to be climbed by any Southeast Asian (and Singapore) climbers, was thought best to be named by the first name our island nation was known by – Temasek, The climbing ridge has been called Ramses Ridge

Peak #2, Singapura I Peak
4589m

N 42° 18.49' E 80° 0.788'

The fairly tough peak was named after 'Singapore' as it seemed to present the kind of challenges our island nation faces. Other peaks in the area, if climbed, maybe called Singapura II, Singapura III, etc. The route has been dubbed Rozani's Route.

Peak #3, Ong Teng Cheong Peak
4743m

N 42° 20.188' E 80° 0.1644'

The biggest peak in the vicinity has been named in honour of the memory of the late President Ong. Mr Ong was the Patron of the 1st Singapore Everest Expedition in 1998 and his support for this mountaineering quest was invaluable. A fitting memorial. The long ridge has been dubbed Wilfred's Ridge. The abortive route from the east side has been dubbed Rabbit Gully.

Expedition summary

The MacCoffee Tien Shan Expedition 2005 departed Singapore on July 20th. The following is a summary of events of the expedition:

- July 21 In Almaty, participated in a media conference organised by Food Empire (Kazakhstan). Five-hour drive to Karkara by the Kazakh/ Kyrgyz border; southeast of Almaty.
- July 22 Helicopter insertion into the Siemienova Glacier in the Central Tien Shan, 80km from Karkara. Acclimatisation and camp set-up day. 3943m
- July 23 Acclimatisation hike and climb in poor weather conditions up the Siemienova Glacier to 4100m
- July 24 Ascent of Peak #1, 4374m, via the south-east ridge. Main lead- climbing by Wilfred. The peak lies in the Sigitova ridge, though it is not marked on our map.
N 42° 19.42'
E 80° 3.589'
An 8-hour day tackling an easy snow ridge to a rocky summit. Perfect weather. Reached summit at 0930hrs
- July 25 Rest day
- July 26 Ascent of Peak #2, 4589m, marked as 4550m on our map. Shani elected to withdraw from the climb early in the morning as it looked too steep/icy for her abilities. Ascent by the north face after negotiating hidden crevasse fields and deep snow. The hardest part was the steep upper section at 55°, where Rozani executed a good lead to the corniced /overhanging summit. Summit reached at 1030hrs. A 13-hour day, and the hardest climb of the expedition.
N 42° 18.49'
E 80° 0.788'
- July 27 Rest day and repairs to equipment
- July 28 Abortive attempt on the steep and rocky east face of Peak #3. This peak is unmarked on the map, but marked as an unclimbed summit. Loose and dangerous rubble forced a retreat.

- July 29 2nd attempt on Peak #3 via the long Siemienova Glacier and the Siemienova Pass route, and then up the east ridge. A 13- hour day with low cloud in the pre-dawn hours, light snow, a false summit to negotiate, some wind higher up. The lead was shared between David, Rozani and Wilfred. Corniced summit reached around 1030hrs. Altitude: 4743m.
N 42° 20.188'
E 80° 0.1644'
- July 30 Rest day and the naming of peaks
- July 31 Helicopter pick-up to Karkara
- Aug 1 Helicopter recce along the Inylchek Glaciers. Future objectives identified and assessed.
- Aug 2 Return to Almaty.
- Aug 3 – 4 Return to Singapore

Satellite communication from David during the expedition

26 Jul 2005, 1940hrs

Basecamp Semionova Glacier

Today, Roz, Beng Cheong and I summited another virgin peak. Our altimeter reads 4,589m at the summit. We began at 2:30 am in the dark of the night. The first few hours were very cold and dark. Even with our recce and planning yesterday, this was charting new ground. The new ice crunch beneath our boots. As we suck the cold air, we kept moving one step at a time. Our headlights kept us focused on the ice and rock, and kept the dark away. It was tough going, the climb and the uncertainty of the untrodden terrain kept our adrenaline pumping. The dawn opens to a murky morning. It was then that we could see the path that we had took, a challenging route. The summit was in sight. The sun appeared much later, giving us a bit of blue skies and bright light. The views at the summit is as always, wonderful. It started to snow later in the day on the last leg of our return to basecamp. We reached basecamp at about 3:30pm. It was an exhausting day. We are tired but elated that we have submitted another virgin peak.

Satellite communications from the glacier is not too stable, perhaps because we are surrounded by high mountains. Upon returning to basecamp, we have been melting snow and making loads of tea. We are all feeling good, tired and thirsty but other than that OK. Dinner is heating up and soon we will be celebrating with some noodles and jerky (which does taste nice when you soak them in the soup)... For now, food.

:) Dave

27 Jul 2005, 1935hrs

Basecamp Semionova Glacier

It is good to rest after yesterday's 20 hour day. We climbed up PEAK 2 through gullies and deep snow. Often, we did not know whether the snow underneath hides the big crevice that could mean a plunge into a deep and dark place... The final ascent to the peak was spectacular, at parts, it was a 55 deg steep slope. Almost at the top, we had to crawl up a 10m overhang. It was excruciating but also very challenging. PEAK 2 did not give up her pride easily. Shani decided not to climb yesterday, taking a bit more rest after our first peak.

It will be an early night for us. We will be waking up at 2:30am again and will attempt our 3rd virgin peak. This mountain is about 4,600 - 4,700m. The peak is capped with snow and ice. Two potential routes are possible. One is a long hike up ice and glaciers, and the second is via rock gullies and scrambling across some boulders. We will take the gully route.

It is raining and snowing right now. I cooked an egg honey omelette for the team. Got to do the necessary to keep spirits up!! We didn't carry eggs here, just the dry powder stuff that changes into mushy orange stuff when you add water to it. Tastes almost like egg...

:) Dave

28 Jul 2005 2130 hrs

Basecamp, somewhere on Semionova Glacier

At 2:30AM the four of us attempted the 3rd peak but turned back after about 2 hours. There are 2 ways up this mountain, the fast but more risky or the longer and seemingly safer route. We tried the faster way today but came to an area with lots of loose rocks. The loose scree and ice made this very difficult for all of us, for me, it is even more of a challenge. I cannot imagine wobbling and scrambling up the mountain on this terrain. The risk is a fall down the side of the mountain, definitely not fun. We agreed that it's way too dangerous and decided to turn back.

We will be trying the same mountain again tomorrow, this time using the longer route. I estimate that it will take us at least 14 hrs to climb and return safely. We will begin at about 2AM again. Waking up at dawn to climb is a norm for climbing mountains. The mountains here are amazing beautiful. Even in murky weather, the mountains still peek at us. As if they are saying, come climb... higher ground. New paths... In sunny weather and at dusk, the colors are amazing. And camping on a glacier, it is never quiet. The soft creaks of the glacier is always present.

We are also trying to get off the glacier a day earlier. We have confirmed our heli rides out on the 1st.

By the way, we are cooking rice and tuna tonight. At this altitude, it does take a long time for rice to cook. At the moment we are all sitting around staring at the rice cooking. It does seem to take a long time...

:) dave

29 Jul 2005 2110 hrs

Basecamp, somewhere on Semionova Glacier

We made it up Peak 3 today. This is perhaps the highest mountain in this area. It is not named and there are no height markers of this peak. It took the four of us, 8 hours of serious climbing to reach the summit of over 4,700 m. We began at 2:30AM again. The path was lit only by our headlamps and the few stars above us. The route up was a long climb with many interesting slopes. As we approach the summit, we climbed over a small crest... thinking that we had reached the summit. Only to realise that there was a even higher hump further away. This is what we face on an unclimbed mountain. We do not even have knowledge of what lies ahead and we just had to make do as we climb. The summit is an overhanging cornice. The highest spot is on an icy edge that falls off down the side of the mountain, We stood a few meters away from the edge. Not a good idea for us to fall off the mountain if the snow and ice decides to move. The climb back was equally challenging. Even then, we managed to catch some sights. The mountains surrounds us, the icy glacier below looking much like a quiet river.

We are all back safely and will be tucking in some dinner soon. It will be a rest day tomorrow and maybe we will start thinking of some names... for the peaks. Peaks 2 and 3 have been very tiring and many stretches during the climb were very exposed. All these puts a lot of physical and mental stress on us. We are utterly tired after today's climb but the feeling is good. We have arranged for our helicopter pickup and am waiting for confirmation for our move down to a lower base but this is some days yet. For now it's rest and food. :) dave

30 Jul 2005, 1735 hrs

Basecamp

We slept for almost 12 hours after yesterday's climb. I think it was something Beng Cheong did to our dinner... hrumph!! Our plans for today depends on whether we will be flying out tomorrow. We are waiting for a message via sat-coms sms to confirm flight. If there is no flight due to some reason or other, then Beng Cheong and Roz will likely go climb a mountain. From basecamp, Shani and me will try and take some shots of them climbing. If the helicopter comes tomorrow, then we will be going out. We had spent some time today on deciding on the names of the peaks...

Looking back, the last 8 days has been challenging. We virtually did 3 marathons over 8 days, lost a bit of weight, ate loads of mushy stuff, drank tea and shared many bad jokes. Not bad eh... :)

for now, Dave

31 Jul 2005, 1335 hrs

Karkara

We took off on the helicopter at 10AM. The heli came in a bit early, we had a fit and a bit of a rush stuffing our gear into bags before trooping into the heli. The flight to Karkara was great, we had a good look at the mountains that we spent the last few days climbing. The sun was up and the views were great.

Civilisation... the first thing I did was to have two baths. The water runneth over rather murky. It was 8 days of grime and sweat. We just had some eats, hot teas and more eats. Everyone is happy. An interesting thing we heard, horse sausage is in season now. We will go check this out at the market tomorrow. Hope no one is pulling our leg...

:) Dave