



## AAC Publications

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### **Raru Valley, Katkar Kangri (R35, 6,148m), Muktik Skal (R26, 6,243m GPS), Lama Soo (5,947m, altimeter); Skilma Kangri (5,979m), east ridge**

India, Zanskar

In August, Panos Athanasiadis, Nikos Lazanas, George Voutiropoulos, and I made a number of first ascents in the Raru Valley. In the past this has been erroneously referred to as Reru. However, everywhere the name of the village is written as Raru, and all local people confirm that Reru is incorrect. We reached the village of Raru (3,789m) by vehicle, and from then on were charged 120 rupees per night, per tent, for all days spent in the mountains. On the 17th we started walking up the Raru Valley, taking the left fork into Katkar Nala. Next day we made base camp (4,460m) at 33°10' 44.2" N, 76°59'40.9" E. [Peaks of the Raru were photographed and identified in 2009 by the Japanese explorer Kimikazu Sakamoto. The same year a small British party also visited the Katkar and climbed two peaks from an unnamed subsidiary glacier basin to the east: Skilma Kangri, 5,979m, via the north face and west ridge, and Mt. Jules, 5,800m, via the south face. See **AAJ 2010**.]

After reconnoitering R35 from the northeast, we attempted the south-southeast face on August 24 but were defeated by a steep, rotten tower above a shoulder at 6,080m. Next morning Athanasiadis and Voutiropoulos tried the east ridge. They reached a 5,700m col on the ridge via a snow gully (60° at the top), then continued up the crest (generally 50-60° but with one step of 80°) to the summit. As this is the most prominent peak in the Katkar Valley, we named it Katkar Kangri. The 700m route up the east ridge was graded D+ (UIAA III/IV 50-80°).

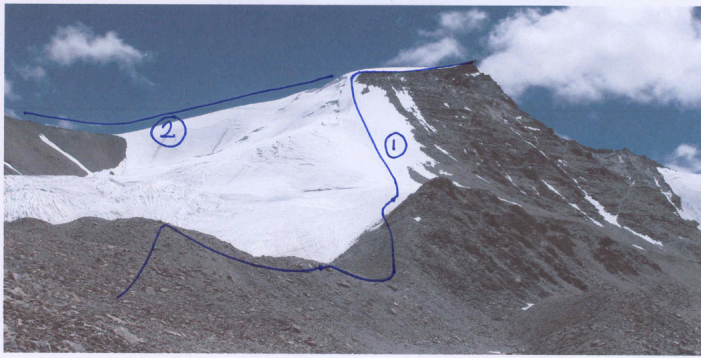
On August 28, Athanasiadis and I set off for R26, located on the watershed ridge between the Katkar and Nateo valleys. It took eight hours to reach a secondary glacier tongue east of the mountain, where we camped at 5,520m. Next day we climbed a couloir (45°) directly to the northeast ridge. Just before a rock barrier forming the steepest section, we found a loop of thick static rope. Unable to discover any references to this peak, we later concluded it must have been left during an unsuccessful attempt. Above, the ridge was sharp, exposed, and the rock poor. We kept to the left flank, only regaining the crest at ca 6,150m. From there 200m of rotten rock (II/III) led to the summit (6,243m GPS, 33°10'37.5" N, 76°56'47.2" E). We have named it Mutik Skal, which means "lost pearl" in local dialect, and graded the 500m route D+ II/III 45-50°.

Meanwhile, Voutiropoulos and Lazanas had ventured up the moraine of the Skilma Kangri Glacier and camped next to a small lake (5,190m) at the foot of Mt. Jules. On the 29th they climbed the unnamed peak northeast of Skilma Kangri, naming it Lama Soo, "the monk's tooth" in local language (5,947m altimeter). The pair climbed the 500m north flank at AD (average angle 30°; 50° maximum). They descended the east ridge toward Mt. Jules, crossing two subsidiary peaks of 5,820m and 5,795m before returning to camp.

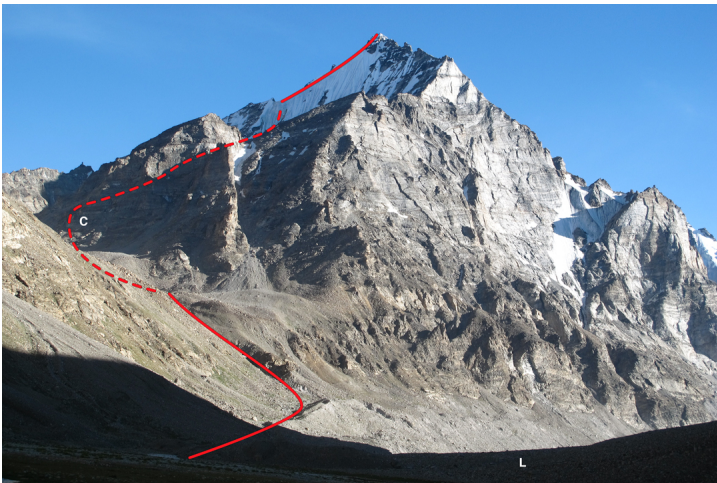
Leaving early next morning, they reached the col between Lama Soo and Skilma Kangri, and from there continued up the east ridge of Skilma Kangri (500m, D- 70° maximum), recording an altimeter reading of 6,020m. They descended the route in seven rappels. This was the second ascent of the peak.

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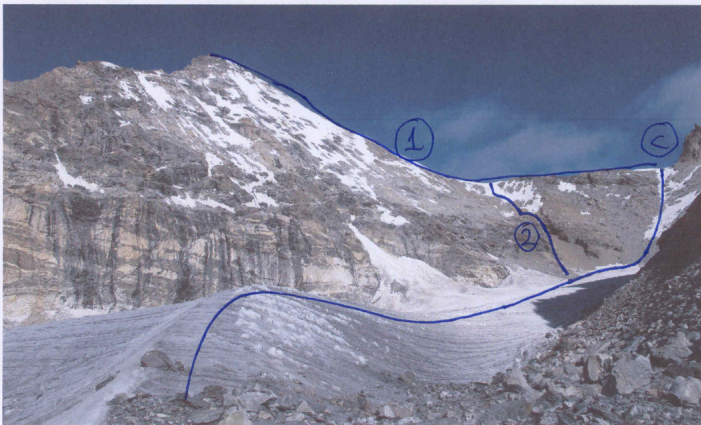
## Images



Lama Soo from the north showing (1) route of first ascent, and (2) east ridge descent to peaks 5,820m and 5,795m. Skilma Kangri is off picture right.



Katkar Kangri showing line of first ascent up north flank and east ridge. (C) High camp (5,100m). (L) Katkar Lake.



Muktik Skal from the southeast, showing (1) line of first ascent up northeast ridge, and (2) descent. (C) is the 5,833m northeast col.



Skilma Kangri showing (1) north face to west ridge (first ascent), and (2) east ridge. Lama Soo is just off picture left.

## Article Details

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