



## AAC Publications

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### **Nangma Valley, Kapura South (ca 6,350 m), southwest ridge**

Pakistan, Karakoram, Maherbrum Mountains, Tagas Group

Paulo Roxo and I had not previously visited the Nangma Valley, and had no clear objective in mind. During research of this area we found neither information nor photos on the innermost parts of the valley, so our expectations were high.

We made an initial reconnaissance and immediately found our goal. At the head of the West Nangma Glacier stood a beautiful peak, Kapura, with an elegant spur leading to Kapura South. It was our dream route, with no apparent objective hazards such as seracs, avalanche-prone slopes, or rockfall.

Between August 25 and 27, we made an acclimatization trip from advanced base camp, first finding a quick and straightforward route across the glacier to the foot of the peak (in only one and half hours). At 4 a.m. the following day we climbed the first part of the route, a broken rocky spur and ice slope leading to a prominent col at the base of the southwest ridge. The first 200m were easy scrambling, after which we climbed six pitches over ice, snow, and easy mixed ground. On the col we deposited a small amount of food.

Rappelling the route in sunshine, we realized there were two traverse pitches were extremely exposed to rockfall. On our final ascent we would need to cross these sections at night. We feel that this reconnaissance invalidated a true alpine-style ascent, even though we fixed no rope and had to reclimb everything on our summit attempt.

After a spell of bad weather, we received a forecast that from September 5 to 11 we would have a lot of sun and almost no wind. On the 5th we left base camp and reached our single tent at advanced base in around five hours. At 3 a.m. the next day we set out, carrying a bivouac tent, and reclimbed 500m to our previous high point, which we had named Alam's Col (5,700m GPS), after our cook's son. We rested there until 1:30 a.m. on the 7th, when we started up the main part of the route.

The face to the right of the ridge was 60-65°, with hard ice beneath a thin layer of snow, left by the previous days' bad weather. These conditions forced us to belay the whole time.

At 7 a.m., after ca 500m of mechanical movement over ice, we reached the rock band cutting across the face above mid-height. We had to traverse right to find a passage around it, then slant back left above to gain the second ice slope, which we reached around midday. On the five traverse pitches we found an unconsolidated thin layer of snow plastered onto rock, making for nervous moves on mixed ground.

The last part of the climb took a long time. Around 2 p.m., it was becoming clear that if we continued to the summit we would end up descending at night. But trusting to the good forecast, and the prospect of sound Abalakov rappel anchors in the good ice, we elected to carry on.

At 6 p.m. we reached the top of the ridge and a small but distinct, previously virgin forepeak, where we ended our ascent. Beyond, the ridge dropped into a notch before rising a little way to the south summit, perhaps 30-40m above. Rappelling from Abalakovs and rock pegs (fortunately, we were able to find decent cracks at night in the rock band), we reached the col at 3:15 a.m., after a nearly 26-hour day.

Thirsty and tired, we decided to relax for the rest of the day. We left the col again at 3:30 a.m. on the 9th (to avoid the danger of rock fall) and began our descent to the glacier, reaching base camp at 11:30 a.m., eager for lunch.

We did not carry a GPS above the 5,700m col, but by comparing with the main summit of Kapura (6,544m) and using simple trigonometry on the distance and angle rappelled, we calculate our top to be at least 6,350m. We have called the route Never Ending Dreams (1,300m, 70° M4). It is the first route to be climbed on Kapura from the Nangma side.

Editor's note: Kapura has three defined tops: the north (highest), central, and south. The first ascent of the main summit was made in July 2004 by Doug Chabot, Steve House, and Steve Swenson, followed a day later by Bruce Miller and Marko Prezelj, via the southwest flank and northwest ridge from the Charakusa Valley to the north (M4 and near-vertical névé). Later the same month, in a 32-hour continuous ascent and descent, Slovenians Tine Cuder and Matej Mejovsek climbed the very steep west face direct from a glacier camp at 4,900m. There is little information, but it is assumed they reached the main summit. In 2008 Czechs Jan Doudlebsky and Marek Holecek made the first ascent of the south summit by climbing a steep couloir on the west face. After reaching the col between central and south tops, the two Czechs turned right and summited the south peak, naming their route Wild Wings (1,300m, WI5+ M7 70°). Holecek guessed the south top to be ca 6,200m, but it seems he may have underestimated its height.

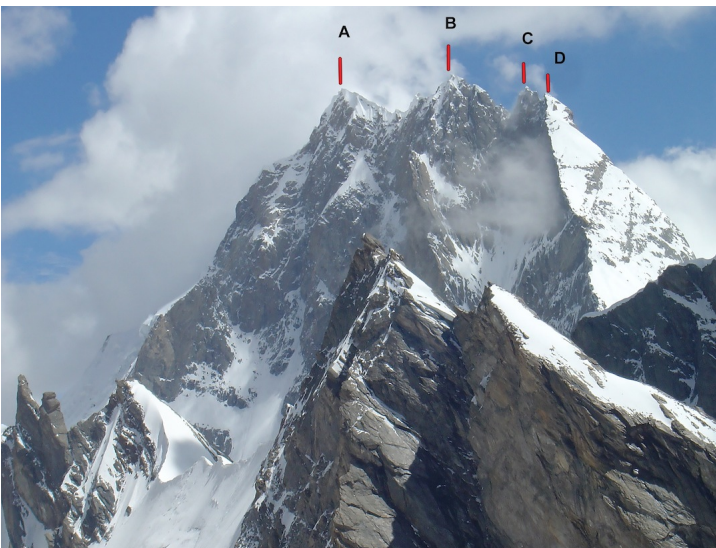
## Images



Never Ending Dreams on the southwest ridge of Kapura South.



Daniela Teixeira traversing around the rock band on the summit day. Alam's Col is visible below.



Kapura from the west showing (A) main, (B) central, and (C) south summits. (D) is the south sub-summit reached by the Portuguese.



Roxo climbing the broken spur below Alam's Col.



Roxo on thin snow/ice, southwest ridge of Kapura South.

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