



AAC Publications

Karyolung, Southwest Pillar and Southeast Ridge; Numbur, Southeast Face, Attempt

Nepal, Rolwaling Himal

In a fruitful trip of less than three weeks, our Catalan team of Oriol Baró, Roger Cararach, and I did two climbs above the Dudh Kund Glacier. After flying to Lukla in mid-October, we approached up the Sor Khola and established base camp at Dudh Kund Lake (4,630m). The head of the valley was surrounded by the big peaks of Numbur (6,958m), Khatang (6,790m), and Karyolung (6,530m), and the southerly orientation of this cirque was favourable for new ice and mixed lines. The weather was wonderfully stable but cold, with the morning temperature averaging around -14°C.

Less than a week after our arrival, we were already on our first route, the previously unclimbed southwest pillar of Karyolung, which rose close to base camp. We spent three days climbing what we christened Dudh Khunda Pillar (1,400m, ED 6a AI4 M4), reaching the summit on October 31. Our bivouacs were at 5,600m and 6,100m. From the top we descended the north ridge, losing 700m in three hours before rappelling to the Dudh Kund Glacier and regaining base camp the same day.

[Editor's note: The rarely climbed Karyolung was first ascended in 1982 by Japanese, via the northeast face, also starting from Dudh Kund Lake.]

After one rest day we set off for the southeast face of Numbur. We made this approach in two days, partly to make sure we arrived at the base relatively fresh. At 4 a.m. on November 4, Oriol and I started up the 1,100m face from a camp at 5,800m, aiming to reach the summit in one day. Though the weather was clear, a morning wind initially made us uncertain. Fortunately, the wind disappeared at dawn, and by 2:30 p.m. we had reached a height of about 6,900m. At this point, about 80m below the summit, we were fighting with totally unconsolidated snow. We had climbed past the main technical difficulties on fantastic ice, but now were faced with snow slopes up to 70° that were impossible to protect. We decided that the risk was too great and descended from this point. To our high point, the route was 1,000m, ED AI5 M4. [Numbur was first climbed in 1963 by Japanese, via the southwest ridge, a route that has been repeated at least half a dozen times.]

While in the area, Roger and I also climbed to the 5,850m col between Karyolung and Khatang via a diagonal line of around 600m and UIAA IV+, descending directly in six very long rappels (November 2). On the 6th, Roger and Oriol climbed what we dubbed the Aiguille d'Amitges del Karyolung (ca 5,200m), a rock pillar one hour from the lake. They named the route Ranxera Nepali (4 pitches, 7a, plus 100m of easier climbing to the top). Khatang has had two ascents, both via the northeast ridge, and has serious potential for new lines from the south. But cold, fatigue, and a certain satisfaction in what we had achieved drove us to the comforts of civilization to continue dreaming of future projects.

Santi Padros, Spain, with additional information from Rodolphe Popier, Himalayan Database

Images



Climbing unroped up the initial rock buttress leading to the southwest pillar of Karyolung.



The southwest pillar of Karyolung, with the 2016 line and bivouac sites marked.



The southeast face of Numbur and line of the Baró-Padros attempt. The 1963 Japanese route climbs the left skyline ridge.



Oriol Baró on the southwest pillar of Karyolung.



Roger Cararach on the fine granite of Ranxera Nepali (7a), a short route close to Dudh Kund Lake.



Roger Cararach, belayed from above by Oriol Baró, climbs a mixed pitch during the ascent of the

southwest pillar of Karyolung.



Roger Cararach and Santi Padros high on the southwest pillar of Karyolung.



Santi Padros just below the high point on the southeast face of Numbur, with the Dudh Kund Glacier below.

Article Details

Author	Santi Padros
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	0
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions