



## AAC Publications

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### **Korona VI, South Face, Georgian Direct**

Kyrgyzstan, Ala Archa National Park

**After staying a few days in the Ratsek Hut, Giorgi Tepnadze and I hiked up to the Korona Hut, a demotivating place due to its poor condition and interior design.** We first went to the foot of Free Korea Peak to inspect a route we planned to try on the north face, and then set up camp below Korona's less frequently climbed Sixth Tower (one of the highest Korona towers at 4,860m), at the head of the Ak-Sai Glacier.

We began our climb on July 9, on a rightward slanting ramp to the right of known routes on the south face. After some moderate mixed climbing, we headed up a direct line for four difficult pitches: dry tooling with and without crampons; aid climbing up to A2+; free climbing with big (yet safe) fall potential, and then a final traverse left to cross a wide snow shelf and couloir. On the next pitch, starting up a steep rock wall, we spotted pitons and rappel slings; the rock pitches involved steep free climbing to 5c. The ninth pitch was wet, and above this we constructed a bivouac under a steep rock barrier, after several hours of dedicated effort.

Next day was Giorgi's turn to lead. The weather was horrible, and Giorgi had to dance the vertical in plastic boots. However, we tried our best to free as much as we could. Surprisingly, we found pitons on two pitches, before we made a leftward traverse, and more as we aided a wet chimney. A beautiful sunset accompanied us as we joined the last two pitches of the Glukhovtsev Route (5B). We climbed the last pitch under moonlight and bivouacked a few meters from the summit in clearing weather. Next day we traversed over Korona V, IV, and III before descending to the Ratsek Hut. The Georgian Direct is 900m, 17 pitches, 5B, 5c M3+ A2+, and is the first new route climbed by Georgians in the Ala Archa. After a few days of bad weather, we got halfway up the Bezzubkin Route (6A) on the north face of Free Korea, before having to bail in a big storm.

– Archil Badriashvili, Georgia

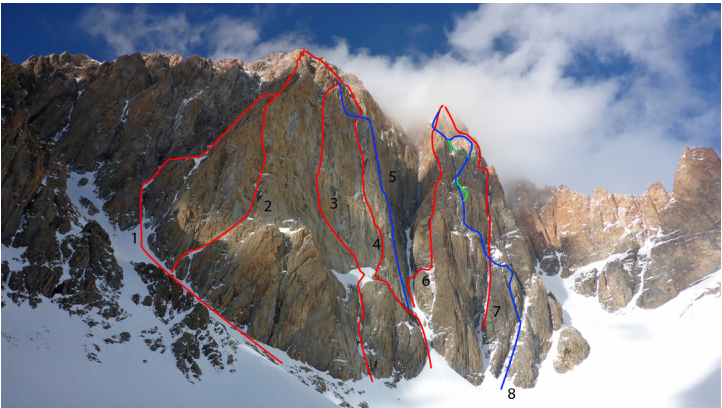
## Images



The north face of Free Korea Peak (center), rising above the Ak-sai Glacier, as seen from the south face of Korona VI.



Traversing onto the steep upper pillar of the south face of Korona VI during the first ascent of Georgian Direct (900m, Russian 5B).



The south faces of Korona V and VI seen across the upper Ak-sai Glacier. Existing routes are marked: (1) 5A, (2) 5B, (3) 6A, (4) 5B, (5) 6A, (6) 5B, (7) 5B, and (8) the 2016 Georgian Route (5B). Note: The green lines show the climbers' revisions to the line they originally drew for route 8 (the Georgian Route). Archil Badriashvili



Giorgi Tepnadze (left) and Archil Badriashvili during their ascent of the Georgian Direct on Pik Korona. Free Korea Peak in distant left.

## Article Details

Author	Archil Badriashvili
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	267
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions