



AAC Publications

Terijuay Massif, Terijuay Grande, South Face

Peru, Cordillera Urubamba

In mid-August, Manolo Urquizo, Coqui Galvez, Andres Putallaz, and I met in Calca and took a shuttle van to Lares on the northeastern side of the Cordillera Urubamba. From there we took a 4x4 vehicle to the village of Cachin in the hills above. Very few tourists come to this area, and the villagers were surprised and wary of us when we arrived. After signing their community journal, as requested, we shouldered packs and headed up the valley westward before they could make any objection.

After a couple of hours, we crossed Paso Yanacocha and descended to Laguna Yuracocha. From the lake we could see the Terijuay massif above. The approach continued up a craggy hillside, and we stopped below the crest to camp as nightfall and rain ensued. At camp we heard the song of a woman grazing her alpacas below, surely to ward off the bad spirits she assumed we were.

The next morning we topped the crest and headed toward the small lakes (Lagunas Tambillo) at the base of Terijuay's south aspect. We soon encountered a group of 12 locals who had hiked up on a trail from the village of Quelcanca. They were waiting for us—a couple of them wielding machetes—and demanded we descend to their village for a community meeting where they would decide if we had permission to make our ascent. We stood our ground, and after an intense discussion where we had to threaten to get the police involved, we were allowed to go on our way.

Entering the moraine, we crossed between a few small lagoons and set camp at the foot of the south face, where there is a large glacial basin formed by the three highest summits of the Terijuay massif. Terijuay Grande (5,380m), first climbed by Italians in 1963 from the east (see AAJ 1964), was stated to be the tallest summit; however, there are two other summits located east of this, the middle of which may be taller. (Glacial melting may have altered the relative heights of the various summits.) Oddly for August, the weather was cloudy and snowy.

We left camp late at 5:30 a.m. on August 17. Our navigation through the lower serac barriers was slow. We reached a point approximately 150m below the two highest summits, but could not tell which was higher, so we picked the western, ice-covered one, Terijuay Grande. After reaching the summit just before noon, we glanced at the rocky summit to the east through the clouds; it seemed this peak, Quelcanca, climbed by the Italians in 1963, was a couple of meters higher. Our ascent was 400m, AD, and we estimate the summit to be 5,330m.

The clouds thickened on our descent and we arrived at the tent with only an hour of light left. It snowed throughout the night and continued the next morning, so we descended promptly to the village of Quelcanca before the storm could trap us. Heavy snow prevented car travel, so we spent the night at the community town hall. The next day, we hiked out seven hours with all our gear to the village of Patacancha and took a car to Cusco.

After reviewing any old reports I could find about this area, I found that another sub-peak of the Terijuay massif, located further west along Terijuay Grande's west ridge, was called Gatuyoc (5,303m, also spelled Gatuyocq). Gatuyoc was first climbed in 1970 by a New Zealand expedition who ascended its west ridge and upper southwest side; this route was likely repeated by German climbers Christoph Nick and Frank Toma in 2001. Both expeditions approached from the north-northwest. (See AAJs 1964, 1971, 2006, and Alpine Journal 1969).

– Nathan Heald, Peru

Images



The new route (400m, AD) up the south face of Terijuay to the west summit (5,330m), first climbed from the west in 1963. The rocky central summit, "Quelcanca," is just to the right.

Article Details

Author	Nathan Heald
Publication	AAJ
Volume	60
Issue	92
Page	0
Copyright Date	2018
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions