



Tetleh Kangri, First Ascent via Northwest Face

India, Zaskar

In September, Juan Diego Amador and David Pérez (Spain) made the first ascent of Tetleh Kangri (6,025m altimeter reading; 33°12'45"N, 76°51'20"E), toward the head of the Tetleh Nala, one of the three main offshoots of the Raru Valley. The peak had been named, after consultation with locals, by the Slovenian team that visited the area in 2015 (AAJ 2016). It is the highest peak on the southern rim of the Tetleh Valley and was designated R10, 6,101m, on Kimikazu Sakamoto's sketch maps of the area (AAJ 2013).

The Spanish expedition left the road head at Raru on August 27, and two days later reached a base camp below the glacier at 4,800m. A reconnaissance took them to below their goal, which they had chosen previously using satellite imagery. The northeast face seemed exposed to stonefall, and while the north and northwest aspects were less exposed to sun, the north side featured large and ominous serac barriers. They established a high camp close to the face and returned to base.

After waiting through two weeks of poor weather they left high camp at 3 a.m. on September 16, crossed the glacier, and started up the northwest face, traveling light with no tent or stove. The first 450m was a snow/ice slope of 55–75°, then came a mixed section of 200m, followed by a final 200m section of snow and ice at 65–75° that led to the east ridge. The most difficult part was the steep mixed section.

At 8:30 p.m., having battled through a snowstorm and then darkness, the two men, realizing they were close to the top, found a small platform at 5,985m and decided to stop for the night. They had little water or food and just the clothes they were wearing, it was blowing, and the temperature was -15°C, making it very much a night to remember. By 6 a.m. the warmth of the sun had begun to clear the clouds, and they quickly ascended the final ridge to the summit, though the visibility was still far from perfect. Now they had to get off.

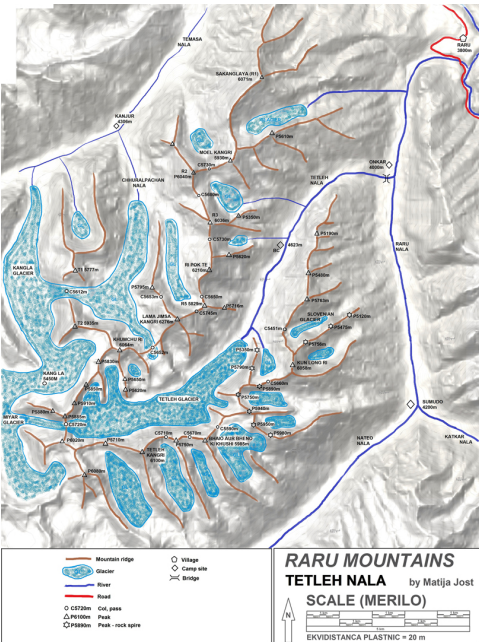
They tried several directions, even the opposite side of the mountain, but the amount of new snow made all these alternatives dangerous. In the end they opted to descend the rocky northeast face. By 12 a.m. it was snowing again. Using rock anchors until they reached ice, where they descended from Abalakov threads, the two rappelled the face. By 8:15 p.m. they were back at high camp on the glacier. Next day, insensitivity in various swollen fingers and toes made them give up any idea of further climbing, and they descended to base camp. They named their route Don't Sleep (900m, MD 75° M3/4), and because Amador comes from the Canary Islands, they dubbed the mountain Pico Islas Canarias.

Lindsay Griffin, with information from the expedition report and Matic Jost

Images



Looking west toward the head of the Tetleh Glacier, with the north side of Tetleh Kangri (6,025m altimeter) dominating the left skyline.



Map of the peaks and glaciers in and around the Tetleh Nala.



Tetleh Kangri (6,025m altimeter) from the northeast. The red line is the route of the first ascent, Don't Sleep (2017), while the blue line shows the descent. There is much less snow on the mountain in this 2015 image than at the time of the ascent.

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