



AAC Publications

Kang Yatze III, East Face, Desesperados

India, Ladakh

In late September, Daniela Teixeira and I headed to the Indian Himalaya. In order to acclimatize, we first went to the Parkachik Glacier, south of the Suru Valley, and walked up to its head, enjoying awesome views of the north and west faces of Nun (7,135m) and Kun (7,087m). A couple of days later, with 23kg rucksacks, we left the village of Tongul and headed south up the valley immediately to the east, having in mind the northwest face of an interesting peak of around 5,800m that we had spotted a few days earlier. We reached the foot of the face at 5,000m and bivouacked on top a tower of rotten rock. Unfortunately, we spent the whole night trying to prevent our bivouac from being blown away by high winds and the next day we bailed.

After two days of rest Panikhar, a little further north, we headed west to the Chelong Valley, where we knew there was an unclimbed technical peak of more than 6,000m. [A picture of this peak, captioned Babang, appeared with a report published in AAJ 2016.] The north face looked very dry. The last two months had seen no precipitation in this region, and constant wind combined with low temperatures meant that the exposed ice was very hard. Even easy-angled slopes had bulletproof ice. From our bivouac at 5,000m, we left early for the face but quickly realized we would need to climb 500m of steep and very hard ice with only five screws for protection. Again we bailed.

With our spirits shattered we returned to Leh, ready to change our flights. However, when this proved too expensive, we decided to have a look at the Kang Yatze massif, south of Leh. On October 19 we began our trek, and the following day passed beneath the east face of Kang Yatze I and eventually reached a bivouac site at 5,700m on the glacier below the west face of Dzo Jongo (6,280m). Our goal was the northeast face of the peak at the head of the valley. [This appears to be 6,340m Ibsti Kangri, climbed in 2010 via the southeast face by an Indo-American expedition that found traces of previous passage on the summit.]

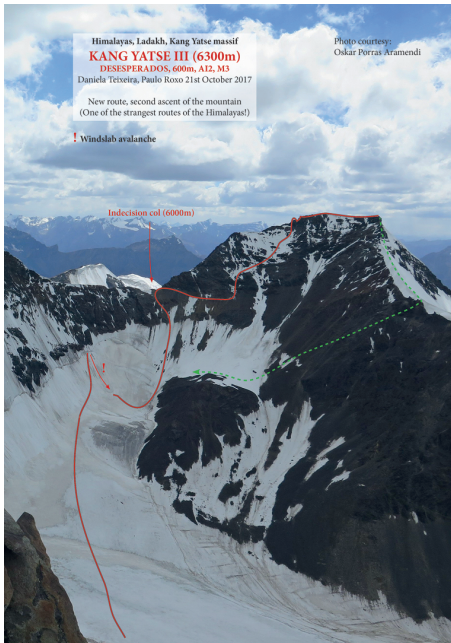
We left our tent at 3 a.m. on the 21st, and in low temperatures began a strenuous walk up glacier in barely consolidated snow. As we climbed to below the northwest ridge of the peak, we crossed dangerous wind slab. At the bergschrund, as I was preparing for the vertical ice wall above, the ground collapsed and Daniela began surfing down moving windslab. Fortunately, she stopped. We regrouped and tried to climb above the bergschrund, but the ice proved too hard. We gave up and started to go down, only to change our minds and head up further to the north, eventually reaching the roughly 6,000m col between our peak and Kang Yatze III. From here, the northwest ridge of our peak looked too rocky (and we carried little rock gear), so we turned our attentions to Kang Yatze III (6,310m). Instead of trying to climb its rocky south-southeast ridge, we traversed onto the east face and immediately found better conditions. The snow was well consolidated and there was just enough ice to place protection. The route turned out to be more interesting than expected, and we reached the summit ridge at 2 p.m. There were a couple of pleasant rock climbing sections before we arrived on the main summit one hour later. Hugs and kisses! At last we were happy.

We found the little cairn made by the 2015 British team (AAJ 2016) and followed their route down the northeast ridge until we could cut right down the east face, descending steep ramps of schist gravel in our crampons. We rapidly reached the glacier and by 8:30 p.m. we were back at our bivouac. This surely wasn't our best route in the Himalaya, but in three days from Leh we had accomplished the

second known ascent of Kang Yatze III and the first traverse, and had established a new line, which we named Desesperados (600m, AI2 M3), based on events during the expedition.

– Paolo Roxo, Portugal

Images



The east face of Kang Yatze III and the convoluted line of Desesperados (red, 2017). The green line marks the descent, similar to the line of the peak's first ascent in 2015.



Daniela Teixeira traversing the east face of Kang Yatze III, with Ibsti Kangri's northeast face behind.



The possibly unclimbed northwest face of Peak ca 5,800m to the east-southeast of Tongul on the main road from Kargil to the Pensi La. The Portuguese attempt was thwarted at the bivouac atop the rock rognon at 5,000m by very strong wind.



Daniela Teixeira on the east face of Kang Yatze III during the first ascent of Desesperados.



Paolo Roxo on a foresummit of Kang Yatze III near the top of the south ridge. The north face of Peak 6,230m is behind.



Paolo Roxo on the summit ridge of Kang Yatze III.

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