



AAC Publications

Teng Kangpoche, Northeast Pillar

Nepal, Rolwaling Himal

Over seven days in October, Matt Glenn and I climbed the northeast pillar of Teng Kangpoche (6,487m; this formation has long been called the north pillar, but much of the climbing faces northeast). We acclimatized by sleeping progressively higher up the Thame Valley toward Tashi Lapcha Pass and made our first attempt earlier in the month. On our second day of climbing, I fell while aiding and injured my little finger. We returned to the valley and found a doctor in Thame, who dressed it and gave me antibiotics. We then had mixed weather for seven days, during which the condition of the pillar deteriorated but the state of my finger improved.

When the weather cleared, showing the surrounding peaks buried in powder, another attempt on Teng Kangpoche seemed the logical option, as it was steep and clearing of snow quickest. We packed our bags with a feeling of *déjà-vu*.

On the first day we simul-soloed easy ground and then belayed four mixed pitches to a snow terrace marking the start of the headwall. The next day we fixed 90m up the lower headwall, following the only feasible line of cracks. This was almost exclusively aid climbing on small gear. On day three we ascended the ropes and continued aid and mixed climbing, heading for the snow terrace at the top of the lower headwall. Night caught us before this, forcing a bivouac in a small alcove. On day four we climbed two high-quality mixed pitches to the snow terrace. Although early, we decided to bivouac on this terrace.

Next day we climbed the upper headwall, mostly aiding a rightward-slanting crack system. Soon after nightfall, we bivouacked beneath a rock band that lies just before the start of the final snow ridge. On day six we made it through the exposed rock band and quested up the ridge, which proved slow going due to unsupportive snow.

Day seven—October 30—was our last on the route. We slogged up the remaining snow ridge and reached the summit at 12:15 p.m. We then descended the east ridge, made two rappels on the north flank, and returned to our tea house base camp at Thengbo just after nightfall. We named the route Massive Attack.

— Tom Livingstone, U.K.

Notes on the Northeast Pillar: This pillar had seen several previous attempts, with the highest point reached in six days of climbing by Juho Knuuttila (Finland) and Quentin Roberts (Canada) in the autumn of 2019: They stopped at around 5,930m (AAJ 2020) and reported difficulties up to 5.11 A3 M7 to their high point. In the spring of 2021, Roberts returned with Jesse Huey (USA), but after repeated storms before and during their attempt, they did not reach the previous high point. The two cached a pack containing some gear and food near their first bivy on the route, anticipating they would return for another attempt. For their own second attempt, Glenn and Livingstone opted to use some of this gear, fuel, and food. Near the top of the pillar, Glenn and Livingstone moved left and then angled right along a ramp system to avoid the blank slab that had stopped Roberts and Knuuttila, then continued straight up to the snow ridge. Livingstone posted a four-part story about the ascent at www.tomlivingstone.com.

Images



The upper northeast pillar of Teng Kangpoche and the line of Massive Attack (2021). (H) marks the high point of the 2019 attempt. The 2021 team climbed a little farther to the left to pass this point and bivouacked twice more before reaching the summit.



Teng Kangpoche from the approach along the Bhote Kosi (Thame Valley) and the line of Massive Attack.



Matt Glenn on the initial section of the lower headwall on the northeast pillar of Teng Kangpoche.



Matt Glenn on the northeast pillar of Teng Kangpoche during the first attempt in autumn 2021.



Matt Glenn climbing on the lower headwall on the northeast pillar of Teng Kangpoche.



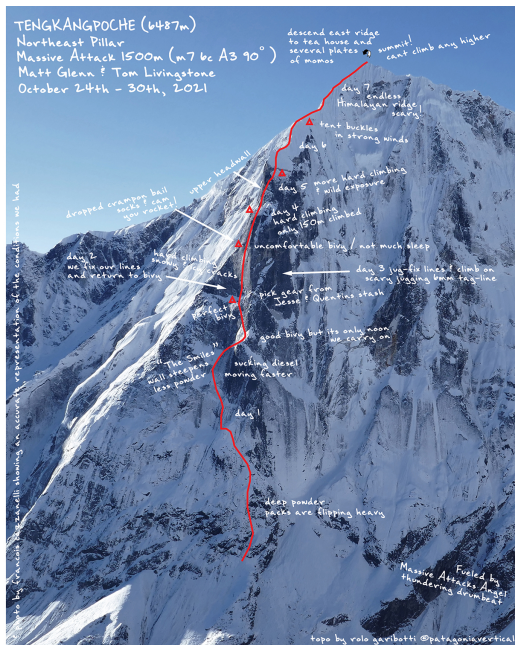
Day seven: Matt Glenn plows up the poorly protected final ridge of Teng Kangpoche's northeast pillar. This section of ridge had been climbed before by a Russian-Ukrainian team as a finish to their route on the northeast face (AAJ 2014).



The full northeast pillar of Tengkangpoche and Massive Attack.



Tom Livingstone on the exposed headwall of Tengkangpoche's northeast pillar.



Annotated photo-topo of the first ascent of the northeast pillar of Tengkangpoche.

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