



AAC Publications

Korada North, First Ascent by West Face and Northwest Ridge; Kapura Central, First Ascent by West Face

Pakistan, Karakoram, Tagas Mountains, Nangma Valley

Top bivouac at around 6,000m during the first ascent of Korada North. The pyramid in the background is Drifika (6,447m). Photo by Tim Exley

On August 28, Tim Exley, Tom Seccombe, and I made a one-day walk up the Nangma Valley to establish base camp at around 4,300m, directly below Zang Brakk (4,800m). Despite unsettled weather during the first few days, we managed to establish an advanced base camp at around 5,100m at the start of the East Changma Glacier. We had a forecast for seven days of high pressure starting on September 1, so on the 2nd we walked to advanced base to attempt our initial objective: unclimbed Korada North (6,146m, 35°24'58.32"N, 76°29'29.50"E).

The next day we walked up the East Changma Glacier and then climbed snow slopes that led to the northwest ridge of Korada North, slightly right of the col at the very head of the glacier. After several pitches of mixed climbing on the crest, we decided to retreat after encountering steep, loose rock on the north flank. We returned to base camp that day.

After a day's rest, we regained advanced base with the aim of trying the west face of Korada North. On the 6th, we started up the initial icefields, climbing 700m up to 75° to reach a leftward-trending mixed ramp that led to the northwest ridge. We camped and then, before daybreak next morning, climbed onto the north face, where about 150m of enjoyable mixed climbing led to the summit ridge. A 15m blank slab guarded what we thought to be the summit. Tom coolly balanced up the slab at M5+, and we were soon traversing the final few meters. We made approximately 20 rappels down the line of our ascent to reach the glacier, naming the route Hot Tang (900m, TD+ M5+ 75°).

Six days of unfavorable weather gave us time to relax in base camp, after which we received news of the long high-pressure system we would need to attempt our main objective of the trip, unclimbed Kapura Central (6,530m, 35°25'43.44"N, 76°30'34.71"E).

We returned to advanced base on the 14th and next day climbed back to the col (ca 5,500m) at the head of the East Changma Glacier, which we hoped would provide a smooth entry into the Second Charakusa Cwm. Three rappels and a short walk saw us establish camp just below the west face of Kapura.

Our alarm sounded at 1 a.m. on the 16th. By 3:30 a.m., we were over the bergschrund and climbing the long snow and ice slopes on the lower section of the face. We climbed mostly good ice and névé for 700m, following the line of Wild Wings (Doudlebsky-Holeček, 2008, to Kapura's south summit; see AAJ 2009), though our conditions were much better. At the base of a large rock wall, we stopped at 1:30 p.m. Deploying our improvised snow hammock (the footprint of our advanced base camp tent), we settled in our tent for a night under a clear Karakoram sky.

The west face of Kapura showing (1) In the Fire (2021) to the central summit, and (2) Wild Wings (Doudlebsky-Holeček, 2008) to the south summit.

The next morning, after a short traverse left, we entered the top icefield, which we climbed up and left to the base of mixed ground. A short step of 85° ice led to some delicate climbing on melting verglas over rock (M4+). Above, we reached the upper snowfield, which led to a col with a tower where,

somewhat optimistically, we had hoped to stamp out a tent platform. Much to our disappointment, the corniced ice ridge forced us to continue. In search of ledges, Tom left the col, climbing a tricky mixed pitch (M6). It was getting late, and rather than push into the unknown, we chopped a small, sloping ledge. The wind picked up, the ledge was inadequate for the tent, and consequently we spent a sleepless night.

Tim was melting water by 3 a.m. At first light, we could see the summit was close. We were all keen to get there so we could begin heading down. A short tension traverse/pendulum placed us on the final snow slopes, which led after 100m or so to the corniced summit ridge and warm sunshine. Sugar snow led to the top of Kapura Central.

Almost immediately we began to rappel. At the bottom of the second rappel, I watched my belay device tumble down the face. Lots of cara- biner brakes and some frozen V-threads near the base slowed us slightly, but 27 rappels and nine hours later, we were back on the glacier. The next day, after a deep, long sleep, we began the tiresome climb back over the col to return to the East Changma Glacier. That evening, six days after leaving, we were in base camp. We named our route In the Fire (1,300m, ED M6 85°).

— Will Lewallen, U.K.

Notes on Korada and Kapura: Korada North is erroneously marked Lukpilla Brakk (5,584m, Peak 123) on Jerzy Wala's map of the Nangma Valley. Lukpilla Brakk is a peak south of Baintha Brakk (the Ogre), and locals do not recognize the name in the Nangma. Korada South (5,944m) was climbed by a Slovenian team in 2004 (AAJ 2005).

The peak widely known as Kapura Central (6,530m, the peak climbed in 2021) is probably the same one marked as Thanda Parbat (6,553m, Peak 122) on Wala's sketch map. The main (north) summit of Kapura (6,544m) was first climbed in 2004 by an American-Slovenian party, while the south summit (thought to be at least 6,350m) was climbed in 2008, as noted above.

Images



The Korada Peaks from the East Changma Glacier. On the left is the 2021 line, Hot Tang, to Korada North. The col at the head of the glacier is hidden at far left. On the right is the 2004 Slovenian Route to Korada South.



The west face of Kapura showing (1) In the Fire (2021) to the central summit, and (2) Wild Wings (Doudlebsky-Holeček, 2008) to the south summit.



Top bivouac at around 6,000m during the first ascent of Korada North. The pyramid in the background is Drifika (6,447m).



Tom Seccombe moving up the summit block (M5+) of Korada North.



Tom Seccombe moving up the summit block (M5+) of Korada North.



Will Lewallen reaching the summit ridge of Kapura Central. The trapezoidal peak of Choglisa is visible behind.



Looking southwest from the summit of Korada North down the Changma Glacier to the great west face of Amin Brakk (left), and to the right the pointed Black Tower (ca 5,800m) on the far side of the Nangma Valley. Tom Seccombe



Tom Seccombe close to the summit of Kapura Central, with the snowy top of Kapura Main behind. In the distance: (A) Chogolisa, (B) K7, (C) Link Sar, and (D) K6 West.

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