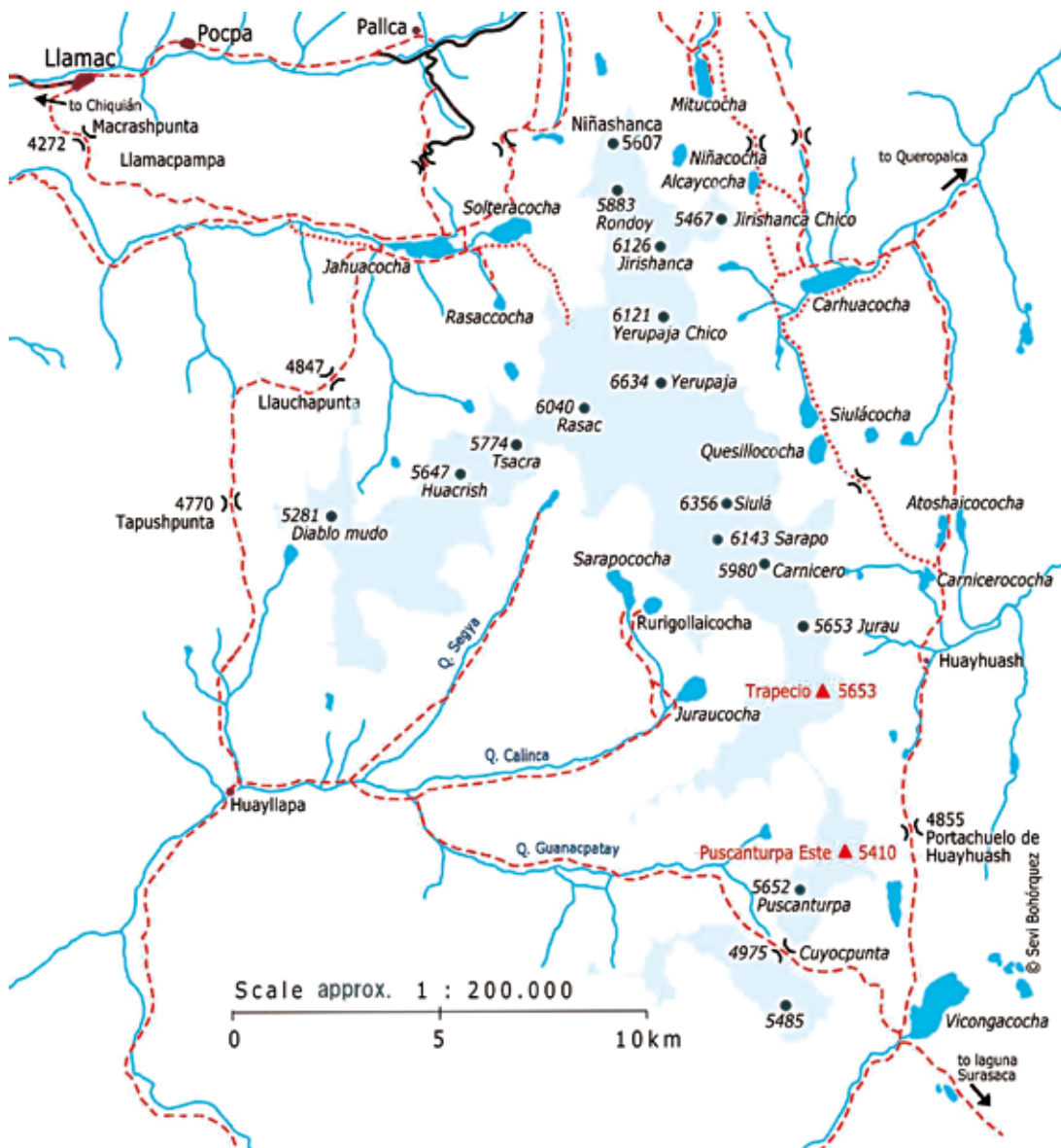


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Climbing in the Remote Corner of Cordillera Huayhuash

Puscanturpa Este and Trapecio, June 2013



(Map drawn by Antonio Gomez Bohorquez)

I flew to Lima with Masaru Noda in late May. Our goal was to climb two big faces in the southeast corner of the Huayhuash, i.e. the Southeast Face of Puscanturpa Este (5,410 m) and the South Face of Trapecio (5,653 m). We expected to climb new routes on both faces.

Pavle Kozjek and Grega Kresal from Slovenia had made the second ascent of Puscanturpa Este by a new route on the East Face and called the route Stonehenge (600 m, VII) in 2007. Our plan was to climb the lower rock buttress to the left of this and directly to the headwall via central snowfield.

As for Trapecio, we only knew Jeff Lowe's remarkable solo attempt on the central couloir of the South Face in 1985. He descended 250 m short of the summit. The article was published in his well-received book "Ice World" then, Pavre Kozjek, Miha Lamprecht, Branko Ivanek of Slovenia and Aritzia Monasterio from Spanish Basque completed the line in 2005 (800 m, ED+ AI6 M5 A2). We thought that the right hand couloir will offer another reasonable line for us.



South face of Puscanturpa Este



South face of Trapecio (Second ascent)

Puscanturpa Este

Noda, a younger member of my climbing club had unsuccessfully made a bold solo attempt of the North Face of Kusum Kanguru (6,367 m) in Nepal in the autumn of 2012. He luckily survived an avalanche and completed his lone descent without any support. I saw he didn't lose heart for alpine climbing and showed him a photo of Puscanturpa to invite him to my new adventure.

After reaching Huaraz, we swiftly made an acclimatization trip to Cordillera Blanca on June 3. Two days later, we climbed Renshaw-Wilkinson direct route 1979 of the Southwest Face of Pyramide (5,885 m) in 18-hour round trip from the bottom of the face. Local rangers had told us about precarious conditions of the face and added "No one succeeded yet, this year", but we enjoyed steep ice, whiteout and waist-deep powder snow.

We left Huaraz on June 8 and reached Puscanturpa's base camp at 4,215 m on 12. After scouting the approach to the face, we left the camp at 2 a.m. on 15. It took us only two hours to gain lower snow

slopes. We roped up at the beginning of the mixed ground around the day break. It was cold enough and my leading on 5.10 crack of the lower rock buttress was something clumsy. Because the crack was filled with snow and easily breaking ice, I felt some difficulties to set each protection.

We completed lower rock at around noon after negotiating loose flakes and pinnacles. The central snowfield was in fact a rock slab barely covered with unstable sugar snow that required us time consuming effort to climb the terrain. Realizing that we must abandon to reach the summit within the day, we made a cold bivy sitting in a small pit at 5,300 m.

Next day, we climbed easy angled slopes and the headwall. Fragile rock and sugar snow could never allow us to set safer protections. Finally, Noda put up his axe at the highest point of Puscanturpa Este being filled with joy. It was at 10:15 a.m. Nevado Yerupaja and other pyramidal mountains of the Huayhuash greeted us all around.

We named the route “Qiumplirgun Swerminganta” which means “Dreams come true” in local Kechuan language. It was rated as 700 m, ED+, VII M5+ A1.

Trapecio

We moved to the new base camp for Trapecio at 4,570 m on June 19 and scouted our line of descent on the North Face. We also reconnoitered the South Face itself next day. Snowfalls in every afternoon forced us to stay in base camp for two days.

It was at 2 a.m. on 23 when we finally left camp for climbing. Noda quickly led an initial ice in the dark to complete the first pitch only in 30 minutes. We switched the lead and kept a certain speed in foggy conditions. We reached the crux in early afternoon. It was a vertical ice in the deep gully bordered to the right with awful mushrooms of ice that looked as if they began to collapse immediately. It was already 3 p.m. when Noda finished the pitch.

Once emerged onto the East Ridge, we hurried to the summit with moving together and reached there at 4:30. The sun already begun setting and urged us to find a suitable bivy site on the North Face. We had to make a bivy at 5,200 m as a result of losing precious time by rappelling a wrong route.

We resumed our descent next morning in warmth of the sun and finally made it to the base camp. We rated our route as 700 m, ED+, AI6 M5+ but didn't realize that the route had been climbed by a Spanish climber called Miguel Angel Pita.

He had tried the route in 2006 with Jose Manuel Fernandez, but once retreated from below the summit. Unfortunately, the latter fell to death during their fourth rappel leaving Pita alone without any rope. He had to solo to the summit and descended to the north without any incident. That's all we learned after returned to our homeland. So, we agree our ascent of the route has resulted as the second one.

Summary of statistics:

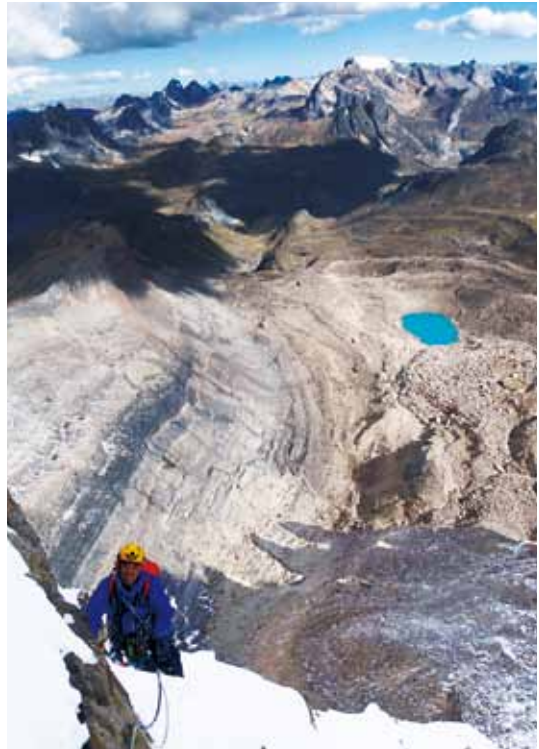
Repeat of the Direct Southwest Face of Piramide (Renshaw-Wilkinson 1979, 800 m, TD+, WI5 AI4+) in 18-hour roundtrip on June 5, 2013; the first ascent of the Southeast Face of Puscanturpa Este (700 m, ED+, VII M5+ A1) on June 15-16; and the second ascent of the right hand couloir of Trapecio (700 m, ED+, AI6 M5+) by Yasushi Yamanoi and Masaru Noda.



Noda on the lower rock face of Puscanturpa.



Yamanoi started the lower rock face on Puscanturpa.



Yamanoi following the upper mixed terrain of Puscanturpa.