



AAC Publications

Churen Himal West (7,371m), southwest face to southeast ridge, attempt Nepal, Dhaulagiri Himal

The high and remote massif of Churen Himal has three summits: Churen Himal West, Central, and East. All are given the same height. In October an Italian expedition climbed the right side of the southwest face of Churen Himal West to reach the crest of the southeast ridge, then continued upward for a short distance to a small top of ca 7,000m.

The Italian team climbed the prominent spur on the face first attempted in 1983 by Gustav Harder's German expedition. This group had climbed a small rock buttress left of the lower spur, then threaded through a glacier to reach an easy-angled snowfield at 5,800m on the spur, where they made Camp 3. From here they began work on the steep upper ice face and reached 6,850m, retreating in a storm. Bad weather pinned several members at Camp 3, and subsequently an avalanche that began just 15m above the tents buried Camp 3 and two of the climbers died.

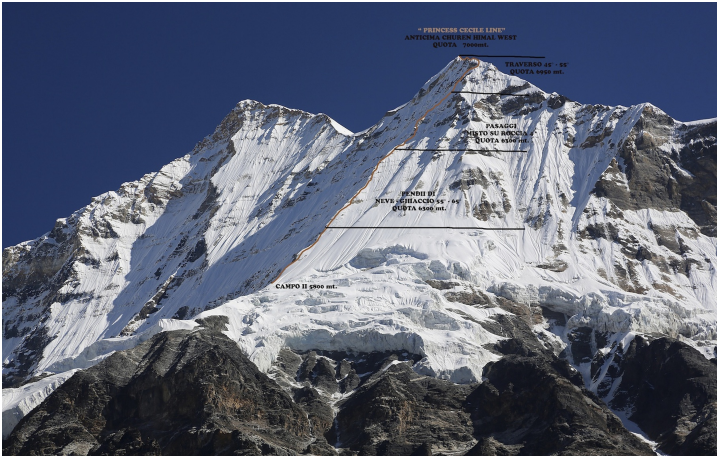
The following year it was the turn of an Irish expedition led by Dawson Stelfox. They found the only safe route to the snowfield on the spur lay in following the lower rocky ridge directly. This gave 20 pitches of difficult climbing, on some of which they fixed ropes. They passed the grizzled remains of the two Germans and reached ca 6,600m before finding progress too dangerous due to rockfall.

In 2012 the Italians also fixed ropes on the spur, making Camp 2 at 5,800m. They climbed the remaining 1,200m at TD+, generally 45-70° ice, but with one pitch of UIAA IV+/V-. Marco Camandona, François Cazzanelli, and Emrik Favre reached the small top at 7,000m on October 15 and christened their climb Princess Cecile Line, after the name of Camandona's granddaughter.

After all had rested in base, Camandona, Adriano Favre, Alain Marguerettaz, and Sete Sherpa set off on October 19 to attempt to reach the main summit. There was also an audacious possibility of continuing further, over the tops of Churen Himal Central and East. That evening Favre decided to descend. Marguerettaz followed suit before dawn next morning, leaving the remaining pair to attempt the summit. At around 4 a.m. they heard cries for help, and on descending found that Marguerettaz had fallen into a crevasse and broken a femur. The team managed to rescue the stricken climber, who was evacuated by helicopter to a hospital in Kathmandu.

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Images



The Italian line on the southwest face of Churen Himal West.

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