



## AAC Publications

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### **Janak (7,040m), west face**

Nepal, Janak Himal

Young Slovenians Nejc Marcic and Luka Strazar, who received a 2012 Piolet d'Or for their fast and minimalist first ascent of the west face of K7 West, made the second ascent of Janak via a new route up the 1,400m west face. It took them only two days, October 21-22, to complete the round trip from their advanced base.

After setting up base camp in Lonak, on the normal trekking route to Kangchenjunga north-side base camp, they made an extended and arduous journey north to establish an advanced base on the rarely visited Chijima Glacier, west of the peak. From here they first attempted unclimbed Lashar II (6,803m), gaining valuable acclimatization but unable to summit due to poor conditions. It was now time for Janak's unclimbed west face.

Luka Strazar takes up the story: "It looked totally different than the photo. We knew that mountains tend to be different from what we see in pictures, but it still surprised us. Our planned line did not look feasible due to poor snow conditions, so we had to choose something a little less direct. Sometimes you have to adapt to the situation.

"We started up the face at 1 in the morning. Our approach across the glacier had been quick, because the footsteps of our reconnaissance trip a few days previously were still visible. On the lower part of the route we climbed unroped up easier terrain and did a lot of complaining about how cold it was. Then we had pitches of steeper climbing, and on one crux section I wished I had done more stretching during the preceding days. Due to low temperatures the ice was really hard and shattered easily. It proved annoying, and never really improved from bottom to summit. We slanted right, and after a total height gain from the glacier of ca 1,050m, reached the crest of the southwest pillar, where we joined the top section of the route climbed in 2006 by Andrej Stremfelj and Rok Zalokar. And it was here we bivouacked.

"Nejc, do you see any crevasses? No? But why not—there should be one around this spot. Shit, where are we going to sleep?"

"Daylight was already fading, and we were forced to dig a bivouac site into steep snow and ice.

The final product wasn't a masterpiece, but it proved relatively warm. I even managed a little sleep; Nejc counted stars all night.

"On the second day we still had enough energy to push the remaining 350m to the summit. A freezing morning and rising wind didn't help our cold feet, so our complaining started on schedule. After a long traverse and a few mixed pitches, which seemed to last ages, we arrived at a col just beneath the summit. We left sacks and ropes, and, often crawling because of the strong wind, reached the top. The view was amazing and the subsequent rappels went smoothly, enabling us to reach our advanced base at around midnight."

The climbers named the ca 1,400m route Modri Dirkac (Blue Racer) and reported difficulties to 80° and M4.

Information supplied by **Luka Strazar** and **Zdenka Mihelic**, Alpine Association of Slovenia

## Images



The 1,400m west face of Janak rising from the Chijima Glacier. The line of Modri Dirkac and bivouac site are marked. The Stremfelj-Zalokar route comes in from the right, at the foot of the rock band below the bivouac site. In 2006, at approximately the same point as the marked bivouac, Stremfelj and Zalokar found an excellent crevasse in which to erect their tent for the night. The 2012 team was not so lucky.



Marcic on the first day of the new route on Janak with Chijima Glacier below.



Nejc Marcic on the lower part of Janak's west face.

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