



## AAC Publications

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### **Tawoche (6,495m), northwest ridge, attempt.**

Asia, Nepal, Mahalangur Himal, Khumbu Section

In November 2012, after climbing Kyajo Ri, Hans Lanter and I moved to Pheriche and attempted the unclimbed northwest ridge of Tawoche. We had been able to see it from both sides: steep sections up to the still virgin north summit (ca 6,350m), then a long knife-edge for 1km to the main top. Due to the excellent snow conditions on Kyajo Ri, we were optimistic.

The climb to the Cholatse-Tawoche col from the east is not simple. We made camp at 5,050m but found no snow until 5,400m. Every boulder moved. We had never come across terrain as bad as this in the Alps, and it was so tiring we had to make two load carries. On our first attempt to climb the couloir below the col we found no ice, only vertical, frozen rubbish. We turned to drier rock on the right and were successful next day. But it involved a scary ascending traverse, dry-tooling frozen debris to reach steep powder snow. We reached the col in early afternoon. Only one party had been there before us—a British team in 1983. An ancient fixed rope was still visible.

Next day, November 5, we set out for the north top. It had taken two days longer than expected to get here, making us low on food. Despite the cold (down to  $-25^{\circ}\text{C}$ ), we felt strong and climbed fast and unroped up the ridge above. In early afternoon we encountered an 80m, almost-vertical rock step covered with powder. Iced, it would give two perfect pitches, but now it was almost unclimbable, certainly unprotectable, and therefore too dangerous. Disappointed, we turned around.

Although we failed on our main goals, we worked well together, always agreeing on strategy. We gained a lot of experience. In short, "successful failures."

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## Images



From left to right: Tawoche, unclimbed Tawoche north summit, and Cholatse, seen from the east. The Dutch attempt on the north summit climbed to the prominent col and then up the left skyline to the rock band just above the pointed snow-covered tower



Hans Lanter inspecting the northwest ridge of Tawoche North. The high point was the base of the snow-covered rock step visible high above

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