



AAC Publications

K7 West (6,615m), Southwest Pillar, Attempt.

Asia, Pakistan, Charakusa Valley

Miguel Anta, Ruben Calvo, and I spent 35 days from mid June to the end of July on the Charakusa Glacier. For the first 10 days base camp was covered with snow. We planned to attempt a new line on the southwest pillar of K7 West.

As temperatures were low we were able start the line up a couloir that would normally be dangerous and rocky but was now snow and ice up to 65°. We established a camp here and then climbed above until we reached the rock wall (the last few meters were 80°). We then climbed a pitch of A3, left our ropes, and descended in bad weather.

Returning when it was much warmer, we saw a huge ice avalanche cascade down the upper part of our line. We decided to alter track to a safer line on the right. From the base of our A3 pitch we traversed up and right for five pitches (up to 5.10a), until we reached a large ledge at 4,900m where we established a second camp. Conditions above were bad. There was much ice fall, and snow covered the easier-angled sections. We climbed one pitch on the face above and, coming across an in-situ anchor, realized we had joined an existing route. Again, bad weather arrived, so we left our two portaledges and descended.

When we returned, it was with the knowledge that we were going to continue up the Slovenian route Luna (UIAA VII+ A2, 1,400m, Cesen-Sisernik-Hrastelj, 2008). We spent six days on the wall repeating a line that could be climbed much faster, as on the first ascent. Conditions were bad, with copious running water, muddy cracks on the lower part of the route, and melting snow and ice in the upper. We moved slowly, established another portaledge camp at ca 5,100m, and after 20 pitches and ca 1,200m of climbing reached lower-angled terrain just below the ridge, where granite slabs were covered with rivers of flowing water. Four to five pitches below the point where Luna finishes, we retreated. We have called our variation start Variante de Sol (5.10 70/80°, 250m).

Cecilia Buil

[Editor's note: The southwest pillar of K7 West is a rock wall that terminates at ca 6,200m; it is a distinct rock tower to the southwest of K7 West. The tower lies at the start of the long snow ridge leading northeast to the summit and has not been climbed, although three named routes, Badal, Luna and Children of Hushe have been established on the wall below, all terminating between ca 5,500m and ca 5,900m. The Slovenian team that climbed Luna in 2008 reached the end of the rock difficulties at ca 5,700m—a little more than halfway between base of rock wall and top of K7 West—but estimated it would take three days to climb the intervening ice and mixed ground to the summit of K7 West and descend to their high point.

The altitude of K7 West has previously been quoted as 6,858m. However, the 2005 sketch map compiled by the famous Polish cartographer Jerzy Wala attributes this height to unclimbed K7 Middle, and an altitude of 6,615m to K7 West. Photographic study seems to confirm this.]

Images



Cecilia Buil above Camp 2 on southwest pillar of K7 West.



Southwest pillar of K7 West. (1) Variante de Sol. (2) Luna. Spanish high point was just before the hidden top section. The pillar on the right was climbed in 2007 by Marko Prezelj and Maxime Turgeon (5.11 A0, 900m).

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