



AAC Publications

Nar Phu, West Face

Nepal, Damodar Himal

In November I led a six-member team to attempt the first known ascent of Nar Phu (5,921m HMG-Finn). This peak lies on the ridge east of the Chulu Group, north of the Kang La. It was brought onto the permitted list in 2012. We trekked for seven days to base camp, following the Annapurna Circuit to lower Pisang, where we left the main trail and headed northwest to the Tibetan village of Ngawal. We established an intermediate camp at 4,330m on the spur below the main Kang La moraine. (Our original intention had been to leave the Annapurna Circuit at Koto, then follow the Phu valley, eventually reaching the Kang La (5,320m) from the east via Naar. However, heavy snowfall in October due to Typhoon Hudhud had deposited one and a half meters of snow on the trail above Naar.) We approached Kang La from the southwest via a 1,000m scree slope, then moved north through knee-deep snow to a small glacier lake at 5,230m. From here we had a clear view of the southwest flank of Nar Phu, a large glacier leading to a steep icefall.

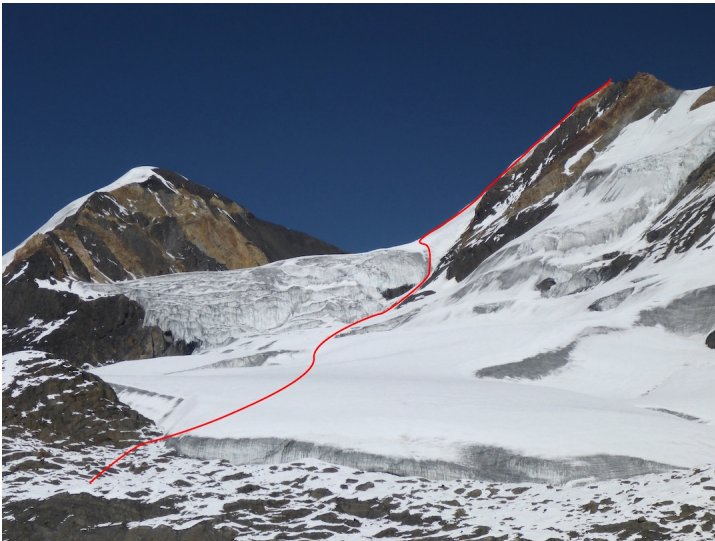
On November 22, Heather Bentley, Catherine Husted, Dawn Richardson, James Salt, Rhiannon Thomson, and I, with Dorje Sherpa, Shika Pandey, and Pasang Sherpa, set out at 3 a.m. We crossed a rock gorge and reached the glacier, where one and a half hours of plodding took us to the 100m icefall. A snow ramp on the right (45–70°) brought us to the upper glacier, from which we climbed the west face directly. We used running belays up 45–60° slopes covered in deep, sugary snow. About 180m from the summit we reached a very steep ice wall with a large crevasse at its foot. Fortunately, there was a well-positioned snow bridge that opened the way to the summit (PD+, 5,930m GPS, 28°43'00.71"N, 84°07'20.19"E). We put prayer flags around the summit and enjoyed the incredible view of the Annapurnas to the south, and to the mountains of Tibet in the north. We reversed our route, reaching base camp at 4.30 p.m.

Brian Jackson, U.K.

Images



ascending the glacier slopes of Nar Phu. Behind and to the south are: (KL) Kang La; (AII) Annapurna II; (AIV) Annapurna IV; and (AIII) Annapurna III.



Looking north at Peak 5,890m (left) and Nar Phu, with route of ascent up the west face.



The final snow wall below the summit.

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