



AAC Publications

Langtang Stupa

Nepal, Jugal Himal

West of the Naya Kanga group and the mountain recently renamed Baden-Powell Scout Peak lies the Chimisedang Lekh, a cluster of steeper, more difficult, and unnamed peaks rising to nearly 5,900m. There is little information on these summits. The main goal for Anna Boldinger and I was the highest top at the northwestern end of this group: unnamed Peak 5,822m (DAV map; unmarked but ca 5,750m on the HMG-Finn map), which lies immediately north of Peak 5,515m on HMG-Finn. We arrived at Langtang village in April. One day's approach to the south, up steep and trackless terrain, brought us to a base camp at 4,800m, at the start of the glacier. Much snow was left over from the winter (starting at 3,600m), making it difficult for our porters. Nighttime temperatures fell to -10°C, and although mornings were mostly sunny, by afternoon it would be snowing.

A reconnaissance immediately showed that snow conditions on our proposed route up the northeast ridge/face of Peak 5,822m were too dangerous, so instead we turned to the southeast pillar of an unmarked peak (5,400m–5,440m high) to the northeast of Peak 5,420m on HMG-Finn. It is the most easterly of the steep rock peaks.

On April 7 we started up vertical rock on the lower section of the southeast face, which led to mixed terrain. The warmth of the morning sun made it perfect for rock climbing, but by the time we had reached the top of the pillar at ca 5,350m, it was late afternoon and snowing. A snowy saddle and easy snow climbing would have led to a higher point, but due to lack of time and bad weather we descended from the pillar, down the east ridge and east face. We called the pillar Langtang Stupa. Our 300m route had difficulties of UIAA V+ M4 AI2 50–65°. Much of the rock was friable.

The weather remained poor and avalanche potential stayed high, so we abandoned any further plans and left for home early, one week before the area was struck by the earthquake, which showed us bitterly how close life and death, happiness and grief, can be.

Eduard Birnbacher, Germany

Images



The southeast pillar of Langtang Stupa (ca 5,350m). The German route climbed the steep rock visible on the lower section (the southeast face) before moving right in the middle (hidden behind the foreground rock) and eventually finishing up the east ridge, along the right skyline.



Eduard Birnbacher on the lower part of the southeast pillar of Langtang Stupa.



Anna Boldinger on the approach to the pillar of 5,350m Langtang Stupa. Behind is the south face of Langtang Lirung. A few weeks later an immense avalanche, released from this face as a direct result of the earthquake, would obliterate the village of Langtang below.

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