



AAC Publications

Lasarmula, East Ridge

Nepal, Far West Nepal, Humla Region, Takh Himal

Standing on the edge of the moraine and surveying detritus of other climbers, Simon Verspeak and I saw our first ascent potentially unraveling. It was not surprising that another expedition had attempted the peak—its snowy pyramid of over 6,200m stood in grand isolation in the Lor Khola.

Until then our expedition had gone smoothly. The notoriously unreliable flights to Simikot had bumped us onto the airstrip on time, with all our bags. A local agent helped us find a man with two mules to transport our supplies and equipment, and after four pleasant days of trekking on a well-maintained trail up the Chuwa/Dojam Khola (local people use the valley for grazing their animals and travel to Tibet) we arrived at the base of the peak we planned to climb: Lasarmula (6,246m).

Having been warned that the rock was not good and the south-facing slopes could be bare of snow and ice, we had identified the north and east ridges as possible routes. To acclimatize, we had hoped to climb a lower peak from a side valley, but after taking a look we were concerned about the difficulty of crossing steep scree and moraine to get onto the glacier. One of the peaks we had identified from a map also had several gendarmes on a ridge of questionable rock quality. So, we abandoned the idea of acclimatizing on one of these peaks and put all our efforts into reconnoitering a route to our main objective.

It turned out the approach from the Lor Khola to the glacier on the north side of Lasarmula was straightforward, and after we got over the disappointment of finding evidence of a previous climbing expedition (in the form of abandoned hardware, food packaging, and two tent platforms), we moved up to the north col to assess the viability of an attempt on the north ridge, which is both steeper and longer than the east ridge. Two rock buttresses barred the route: The first appeared as if it could be turned on the left, but the second looked like it could not be passed. By now we had also established that prolonged, post-monsoon cold temperatures meant the snow was unconsolidated.

Retreating to base camp in high winds, we resolved to attempt the east ridge. After just one rest day, we returned to high camp, and the following day slogged through deep snow on the glacier. Circumnavigating crevasses, we spotted some abandoned fixed lines, but at around 5,200m these ceased. Due to our slow progress, we put a camp lower than hoped, at about 5,450m, setting us up for a long summit day.

On November 11, it took another three hours to gain the crest of the east ridge, where snow conditions improved. The ridge was about 1,300m in length and AD/AD+. We pitched a couple of steeper sections but mostly moved together. It was notable that we found no fixed ropes on the ridge, leading us to believe we may well have made the first ascent of this peak.

The peak is not named on any map we found. The name Lasarmula (also Lasarmu La) was given to us by our Simikot agent, Rinjin Lama, after he made some inquiries. I have also been informed that it may be called Chhamsark Daha or Chhamsacka. The expedition wishes to thank the Mount Everest Foundation, BMC (with the Julie Tullis Award), the Montane Alpine Club Climbing Fund, and the

Austrian Alpine Club for funding.

Rebecca Coles, Alpine Club, U.K.

Images



Lasarmula (6,246m) seen from the Lor Khola. The east ridge faces the camera; the unclimbed north ridge is the right skyline.



Simon Verspeak on the east ridge of Lasarmula (6,246m). The Lor Khola is at bottom left, and the distant peaks on the left half of the picture form the border with Tibet. The horizontal-topped mountain in far left is Lachama Chuli (6,721m), and the slightly lower peak to its right is Gave Ding (6,571m), climbed in 2015 by Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden.



Rebecca Coles on the east ridge of Lasarmula (6,246m). Behind her, to the east-northeast, are the Tibetan border peaks of the Changla Himal. The horizontal-topped mountain just right of center is Lachama Chuli (6,721m), whereas the slightly lower peak to its right is Gave Ding (6,571m), climbed in 2015 by Mick Fowler and Paul Ramsden. Simon Verspeak

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