



AAC Publications

Ombigaichen: Southwest Ridge

Nepal, Mahalangur Himal, Khumbu Section

On November 1 the Ukrainian team of Vitaly Golev, Yuri Kilichenko, Maxim Perevalov, Peter Poberezhnyi, and Yuri Vasenkov climbed a new route on Ombigaichen (6,340m), the beautiful, fluted peak that lies between Ama Dablam (6,814m) and the Mingbo La (5,845m).

Ombigaichen was first climbed in November 1960 by Jim Milledge (U.K.) and Ang Tsering from Ed Hillary's Silver Hut expedition. This pair climbed the northwest ridge and gave the peak the name Puma Dablam ("daughter Dablam"). An ascent was made via the south ridge, above Mingbo La, in December 2002, the year it was opened as a trekking peak, but the mountain is still rarely climbed.

The Ukrainian team left their camp in the Mingbo Valley at 4 a.m. on October 29 and headed up toward Mingbo La, before working left and setting foot on the southwest ridge a little before 10 a.m. The first part of this elegant ridge featured many mushrooms and was regularly cut by difficult crevasses. On the second day they climbed through the loose rock band that forms the middle section of the ridge. Protection was often difficult to arrange, on difficulties between 5b and 6a. Above, they spent the next three or four hours solving more "snow puzzles," before finding a place to stop for the night. On the third day it was more snow, ice, and mushrooms, and at dusk, with the altimeter registering 6,200m, they constructed a sitting bivouac and waited out the night. To their surprise, next morning it was only half a rope length to the summit, instead of the three hours they had anticipated—due to the extreme dryness of the air, the altimeter had underestimated their height.

The new route, Wild West, is 780m high with 1,100m of climbing, and has an average steepness of 55° and an overall Russian grade of 5B. The arête had average steepness of 50° below the rock barrier and 65° above. The route was considered objectively very safe, and the most taxing aspect of the climb was trying to construct bivouac sites on the crest of the ridge, where much ingenuity was needed. The climbers enjoyed more than a month of continuous fine weather during their stay in the Khumbu.

– Lindsay Griffin, with information from Elena Dmitrenko, Risk.ru

Images



On the upper section of the southwest ridge of Ombigaichen, with Chamlang and the Hunku Valley behind.



On the initial section of the southwest ridge of Ombigaichen.



Ombigaichen (6,340m) from the southwest. The Ukrainian route Wild West (2016) follows the obvious central ridge, with bivouacs marked. The south ridge (right skyline) was climbed by a small British team in December 2002.



Climbing through the rock barrier on the first ascent of the southwest ridge of Ombigaichen.

Article Details

Author	Lindsay Griffin
Publication	AAJ
Volume	59
Issue	91
Page	328
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions