



Gangapurna West, North Face, Attempt

Nepal, Annapurna Himal

Simon Messner and Phillip Pruenster (Italy) planned to attempt the north side of Gangapurna West (a.k.a. Asapurna, 7,140m) from the Manang Valley in September. The weather was good on arrival at base camp (5,000m) and the planned route not too technically difficult, but there was a lot of snow. On their first acclimatization trip up the route, the two plowed through knee- to hip-deep snow to an altitude of 6,000m, where they chose to camp for the night. Before erecting the tent, they were hit by an avalanche and swept some distance. Neither was hurt, and after pitching their tent on the debris and spending the night, they descended the following day.

After a period of bad weather, they made another acclimatization ascent, this time reaching 6,200m, where they spent the night. Unfortunately, it snowed a lot, their gear got wet, and they descended the next day.

On September 22, after three days of snowfall, Messner climbed back up toward the high camp, intending to head for the summit alone (Pruenster was ill). Conditions were now excellent, with all the new snow frozen. When he got to the campsite, he found the tent had disappeared, probably swept away by an avalanche. He searched for two hours but found nothing. The two subsequently abandoned the expedition.

Gangapurna West, which was officially brought onto the permitted list in 2014, was nearly summited from the south in 2016 by three Korean climbers, who went on to climb a direct new route up the south face of Gangapurna (AAJ 2017).

– Information supplied by **Rodolphe Popier**, Himalayan Database

Images

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