



## **Pandra, Northeast Face, Peine Plancher**

Nepal, Janak Himal

**In October, Mathieu Détrie, Pierre Labbre, and Benjamin Védrines (France) made the second ascent of Pandra (6,850m map height, 27°51.897'N, 87°59.547'E) via a new route on the northeast face.**

In the fall of 2002, three Danes made the first ascent of Pandra via the south face (TD-). In November 2016, Kei Taniguchi and Junji Wada (Japan) attempted the right side of the northeast face, reaching the north ridge and continuing up this until 300–400m below the summit, where they retreated due to poor conditions, cold temperatures, and wind (AAJ 2017). Taniguchi died in a climbing accident in Japan just one month later.

Approaching from Ghunsa, the three French trekked for five days to a base camp at 5,140m, still some distance from the face. Next day, October 7, they established an advanced base at 5,500m, across the Chabuk Glacier from the northeast face, next to a small lake named Pokari. From here they could see that conditions on the face were much better than at the time of the Japanese attempt. Over the next two days they climbed a 6,200m peak just to the east of their camp to acclimatize.

After four days' rest at base camp, they returned to advanced base, and on the 16th they set off at 6 a.m., crossed the Chabuk Glacier, and started climbing the face around 10:30 a.m., when the sun had moved off it. They took a line left of and entirely independent from the Japanese line, finding thin ice and a little mixed terrain, some of it very steep. They bivouacked at 6,000m. The next day began with a very hard pitch of thin ice. Above, steep ice climbing led to a pitch of M6, followed by steep snow to their second bivouac, a comfortable site at 6,400m.

Their third day involved ice and another section of hard mixed, followed by snow slopes to the top, which they reached at 2 p.m. They rappelled the route, arriving back on the glacier at 9 p.m., three hours after dark. The route was named Peine Plancher (1,200m, WI6 M6), and featured some sections of ungradable and impossible-to-protect snow, like that found in Alaska. The team said the northeast aspect protected them from the wind, so they never really got cold, and there were minimal objective dangers.

Although Pandra's official height on the HMG-Finn maps is 6,850m, on the first ascent of the mountain, in 2002 via the south face, three Danish climbers measured the altitude by GPS as 6,673m. The French carried no GPS device.

– Lindsay Griffin, with information from Rodolphe Popier, Himalayan Database, France

## Images



Benjamin Védrières at about 6,600m on the northeast face of Pandra, climbing one of the last ice pitches (WI4+) below the summit.



Benjamin Védrières on the second crux pitch (M6) of the second day of the ascent of Pandra's northeast face, just below the bivouac site.



Mathieu Détrie on the crux ice pitch (WI6) on the second day of the northeast face of Pandra.



The northeast face of Pandra. (1) Peine Plancher (2017). (2) Japanese attempt (2016).



Pierre Labbre before the final wall on the last day of the ascent of Pandra's northeast face.

## Article Details

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