



## AAC Publications

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### **Chulu West and Chulu Southeast, Historical Revision**

Nepal, Damodar Himal

The Chulu Group from the Annapurna Circuit trekking route to the south: (A) Chulu West, (B) Chulu East, and (C) Chulu Southeast. The south-facing walls of both Chulu West and East are thought to be unclimbed. Photo by Damien Gildea

**WIDELY REPORTED have been the ascents by Carlo Stratta (Italy) on the southwest face of Chulu West (6,419m, see AAJs 1988 and 1989). However, these ascents actually took place on Peak 6,429m (28°43'30.24"N, 84°3'5.82"E), a summit that could logically be called Chulu Southeast, and was likely first climbed in October 1981.**

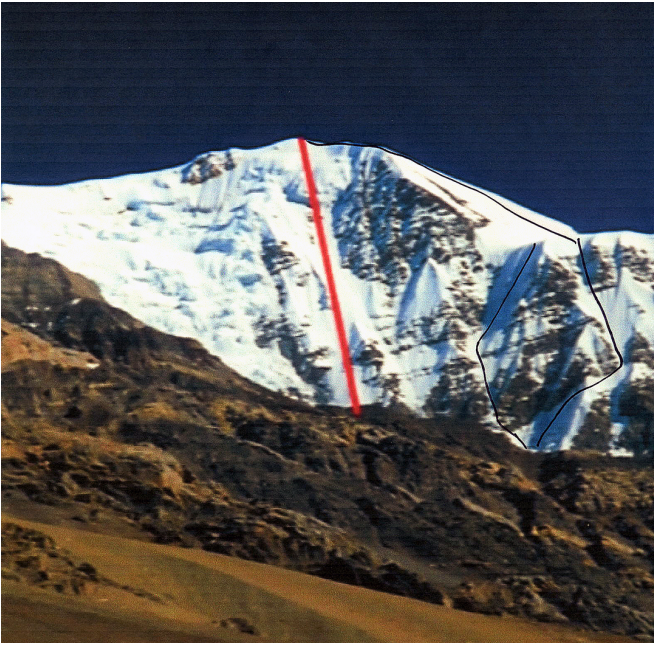
On October 14, 1987, Stratta and Dawa Lama Sherpa climbed the south-southwest face of Peak 6,429m directly to the summit. The snow was in perfect condition, even in the full sun of the afternoon, and Stratta only used two axes for a steep section (70°+) to bypass a serac wall just below the top.

The same two climbers returned in October the following year and climbed two routes on the southwest face to the shoulder at around 6,000m on the southeast ridge. Again, snow conditions were optimal and piolet traction was not required. They left around 10:30 p.m. on the 7th and climbed a couloir on the left side of the face to the shoulder. After a short rest they rappelled down and then climbed a second couloir, more to the right, back up to the shoulder. From here they continued to the summit, and were back at their camp shortly after 8 p.m. on the 8th.

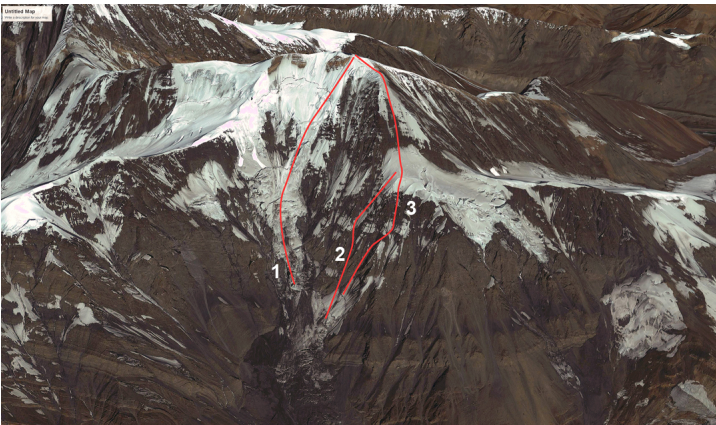
In 1978, Lhakpa Nuru, Jangbu Sherpa, Peter Lev, and Larry Zaroff climbed Chulu West via a variant to the 1952 Japanese route (the normal route). They "short cut" access to this ridge by continuing west in the ablation valley, some distance past the place where the normal route ascends steep scree slopes to a 5,172m col in the ridge, and then climbed direct to the crest via a rock buttress (around 5.6). Lev was guiding Zaroff on this ascent and ropes were fixed; a few old pitons and sections of rope may still remain. Above the buttress they connected with the normal route and followed this to the summit (see AAJ 1979).

– Lindsay Griffin, with information from Peter Lev, USA, and Luca Signorelli and Carlo Stratta, Italy

## Images



Taken from a DVD video, the south-southwest face of Peak 6,429m and the three routes climbed by Carlo Stratta and Dawa Lama Sherpa in 1987 (red) and 1988 (black).



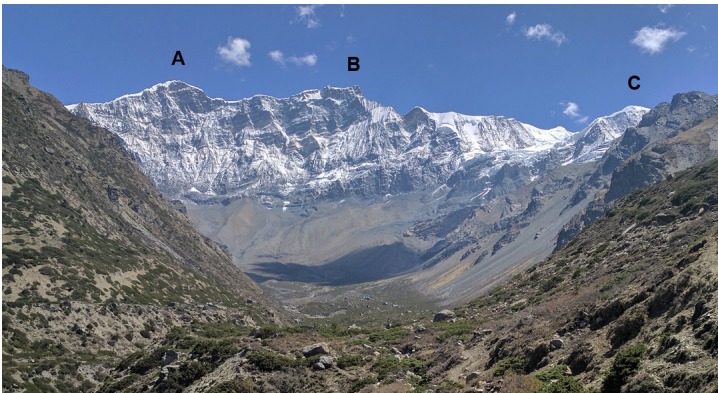
Chulu Southeast (6,429m) in much drier condition than when climbed in 1987 and '88 by Carlo Stratta and Dawa Lama Sherpa. (1) 1987 Direct. (2) 1988 to southeast shoulder only. (3) 1988 to summit.



The west face of Chulu West seen in 1978. (1) Upper section of the normal route (north ridge). (2) The west spur climbed in 2017 by Germans to gain the crest of the unclimbed southwest ridge at around 5,850m (AAJ 2018).



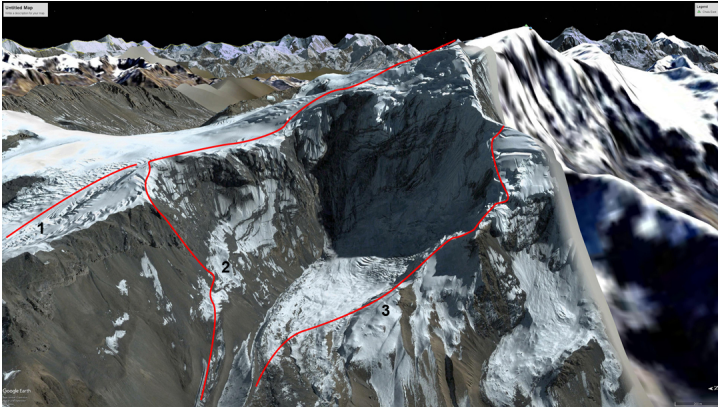
Peter Lev at the top of the rock band climbed by the 1978 American-Nepalese team, short-cutting the normal route to the crest of the north ridge. The last piece of fixed rope can be seen below. The valley below leads down toward the village of Ledar in the main Manang valley and the classic Annapurna Circuit trekking route.



The Chulu Group from the Annapurna Circuit trekking route to the south: (A) Chulu West, (B) Chulu East, and (C) Chulu Southeast. The south-facing walls of both Chulu West and East are thought to be unclimbed.



Chulu West seen from the west en route to the Thorung La. The left line is the normal route, which finishes up the north ridge. The right-hand line was attempted in 2017 by German climbers on the west spur and southwest ridge. The serac-torn face in between is unclimbed.



Chulu West from the west with (1) the normal route, (2) the 1978 American-Nepalese variation, (3) and the 2017 German attempt on the west spur and southwest ridge.

## Article Details

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