



Kyajo Ri, Lapse of Reason

Nepal, Mahalangur Himal, Khumbu Section

FOLLOWING A TIP from Czech mountaineer Martin Otta, Marek Holecěk and Jan Smolen attempted Kyajo Ri (6,151m) from the west in the spring of 2017. Approaching via the village of Landen (4,400m) in the valley of the Bhote Kosi, the two climbed 700m up a steep couloir on the left side of the west face to reach the north ridge. They progressed along the very sharp crest a short distance to bivouac on a spot they dubbed the Eagle's Nest, a little above 5,800m. The following morning Smolen suddenly became quite ill, began to vomit, and his brain "reeled." The retreat proved difficult, but they successfully descended the wall, after which there was no strength left for a subsequent attempt.

For a return match in spring 2018, Holecěk enlisted Zdeněk Hák, his partner from the 2017 new route on Gasherbrum I (AAJ 2018). With two other Czechs, Holecěk first spent three weeks trekking in the Khumbu area, crossing high cols and eventually climbing a peak of around 6,500m. When he arrived at Landen to meet up with his climbing partner, Holecěk was exhausted. Hák was full of energy but not acclimatized, so the two were evenly matched.

They walked up from Landen to a bivouac at 4,900m, from which they could see the peak was far drier than the previous year, and the line Holecěk had climbed with Smolen simply didn't have enough snow. They next morning, May 26, they left at around 4 a.m. and found a barely feasible line further left, which they followed over friable rock to reach the crest of the north ridge around midday. From there they continued along the sharp and exposed crest to gain the Eagles Nest at around 4 p.m.

The next morning they rappelled 30m on the left side of the ridge and moved onto the northeast face, where névé alternated with broken and sometimes overhanging or wet rock. Most pitches proved a struggle, and meaningful protection was almost nil.

They crossed the summit as the sun was setting and descended around 300m of the southwest ridge (normal route) before bivouacking. Next day, May 28, they continued down the ridge to the upper Thesebo Valley and walked out to Namche.

The Czechs' new route up the west face, north ridge, and northeast face, with about 1,200m in vertical elevation but more than 1,600m of climbing, was named Lapse of Reason (ED+ M6 WI4+ UIAA III+).

– From information supplied by **Marek Holecěk**, Czech Republic

Images



Marek Holeček on the north ridge of Kyajo Ri just before the bivouac at the Eagles Nest (ca 5,800m). Behind him lies part of the southeast ridge of Lungaretse (5,916m).



Marek Holeček on the narrow crest of the north ridge of Kyajo Ri on the first day of climbing the new route Lapse of Reason.



Marek Holecěk on the northeast face of Kyajo Ri on the second day of the ascent of Lapse of Reason.



Marek Holecěk leading steep mixed ground on the northeast face of Kyajo Ri.



Marek Holecěk on the mixed northeast face of Kyajo Ri during the second day of the new route Lapse of Reason.



Seen from the north ridge, the steep upper northeast face of Kyajo Ri showing the line of Lapse of Reason.



Kyajo Ri seen from the southwest. (1) The 2018 ascent of Lapse of Reason. (2) The 2017 unsuccessful attempt that stopped on the north ridge. (3) The southwest ridge descended by Hák and Holecěk into the Thesebo Valley on the far side. The pointed summit on the left is Lungaretse.



Kyajo Ri seen from high on a ridge to the northeast, above Machermo. (1) Southeast ridge (2005). (2) Stealing Beauty (2013). (3) New Zealand attempt on the northeast face (2011). (4) Italian attempt on northeast face (2009). (5) Approximate upper section of Lapse of Reason (2018).



The west face of Kyajo Ri showing the 2018 line to the crest of the north ridge (red) and the 2017 attempt (blue). The bivouac site at the Eagle's Nest is marked, as is the bivouac on the descent of the southwest ridge. From the Eagle's Nest, the Czech route slanted up the northeast face behind the skyline ridge.

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