



AAC Publications

Amotsang, South Ridge

Nepal, Damodar Himal

Seen from the east: (A) Amotsang, (B) Jomson Peak, and (C) Margot Peak. The solo first ascent of Amotsang was by the south ridge, beyond the left skyline. Photo by Paulo Grobel

Amotsang (6,393m, 28°50'5.76"N, 84°10'13.19"E) was brought onto the permitted list in 2002. French guide Paulo Grobel reconnoitered the peak in 2003 but did not make an attempt. Instead, he climbed a 6,084m summit to the southwest of Amotsang that he named Thansunjiti. He later reached the 5,642m col between Thansunjiti and Jomson Peak (6,335m, inaccurately named on the HMG-Finn map), and from there climbed the rocky south ridge of Peak 6,120m, traversed east below its summit to reach the west ridge of Jomson, and followed the crest to make the first ascent of Jomson.

In 2009, an Australian team tried to access the glacier to the north of Amotsang for an attempt, but were foiled by bad weather. In 2012, the French guide Lionel Chatain made the first of two unsuccessful trips to attempt Amotsang via the west ridge, approaching from the north. He reached the crest west of Jomson Peak and attained a height of 6,220m on that peak before retreating, after realizing snow conditions were too bad to protect his clients. As a consolation prize, Chatain and clients made the first ascent of Peak 6,305m, on the ridge north of Jomson Peak, naming it Margot Peak. Chatain returned in 2017 but failed to climb Amotsang.

In 2018, Grobel was back, planning to reach the 6,147m col (dubbed Sasurali Pass) at the head of the glacier on the north side of Amotsang, the low point between Peak 6,185m and Margot Himal, then traverse Margot Himal and Jomson Peak, and finish up the west ridge of Amotsang. However, the team retreated from 6,200m on the northeast ridge of Margot Peak.

In the fall of 2019, as a preparation for a solo winter attempt on Everest, the German Jost Kobusch arrived with two porters and set up base camp on October 18 at around 4,700m on the south side of Amotsang. The last day had been a 12-hour hike from the village of Nar, and after the porters had dropped their loads they immediately set off at a run back to the village, leaving Kobusch alone.

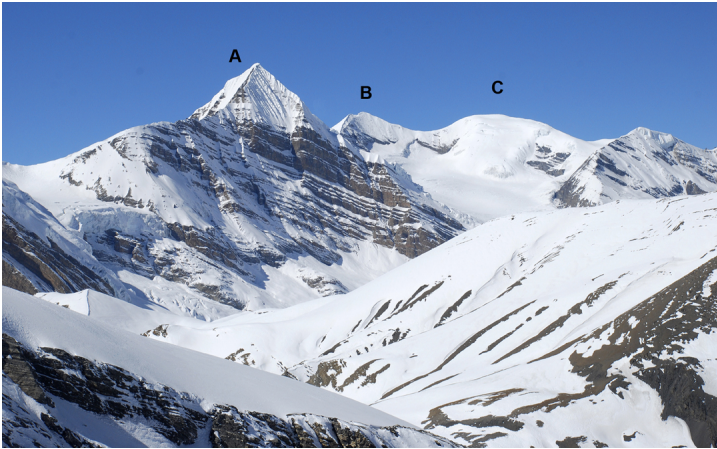
Kobusch's preconceived plan had been to attempt the southwest face, but he quickly found he couldn't reach this face alone. He then inspected an approach to the southeast face, establishing a second camp on the 21st at 5,600m, close to the start of the glacier. On the 22nd he checked out the route through the icefall.

After a rest day, at 4 a.m. on the 24th, Kobusch set out to climb the southeast face directly. Although he saw good ice runnels that would be fine for a solo climber, the initial 50m rock wall was highly shattered and looked too difficult to attempt on his own. From his vantage, the south ridge now looked like the best option. But as he moved up the ridge, it too had a few surprises, in the form of serac walls, steep sections of ice, and deep snow. The ascent therefore took longer than expected, and he only reached the summit of Amotsang at around 5 p.m. As he started to descend, the sun began to set. One hour in twilight and another three in the dark brought him back to camp. Next day he returned to his base camp, and the following day packed up and walked out on his own to Nar.

Kobusch later spent the winter attempting Everest, solo and without bottled oxygen, by the West Ridge route, accessed via the Lho La. Late in the season he reached a high point of 7,366m on the West Shoulder.

– **Lindsay Griffin**, with information provided by Jost Kobusch, Germany

Images



Seen from the east: (A) Amotsang, (B) Jomson Peak, and (C) Margot Peak. The solo first ascent of Amotsang was by the south ridge, beyond the left skyline.



Amotsang from the south in poor weather, showing part of the solo first-ascent route.



(A) Amotsang. (J) Jomson Peak. (M) Margot Peak. (S) Sasurali Pass. (P) Peak 6,120m. (T) Thansunjiti. The route of the October first ascent of Amotsang is marked.

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