



AAC Publications

Ardang, First Ascent via North Face and North-Northwest Ridge

Nepal, Far West Nepal, Phupharka Himal

Ardang (6,034m) from the north, showing the Canadian first ascent (with two camps) in red and the British attempt on the northeast ridge in blue. Photo by Emily Ward

In late autumn, two teams attempted unclimbed Ardang (6,034m) in the Limi region: Bryce Brown and Sunny Twelker (Canada), and Mark Bielby and Emily Ward (U.K.). Ardang was officially opened for mountaineering in 2014, though it had been the main goal of Paulo Grobel's 2013 expedition (AAJ 2014).

Villagers of the Jang Valley/Limi Khola, which is traveled en route to the north side of Ardang (and also used to make a southern approach to the Takphu Himal), told the Canadians that Ardang was sacred and therefore they could not set foot on the mountain. The Canadians were traveling with a Sherpa guide and friend, who was able to negotiate on their behalf. They eventually were given a blessing from the village elders in exchange for a "local tax" of \$150, but were told the mountain could only be attempted from the northwest, as a snow leopard lived in the valley to the east. The elders were concerned the Canadians might anger the leopard, which would then come into the Jang Valley and eat their livestock. This is the third known incident in Limi of locals not recognizing permits issued by Nepal's central government.

Mark Bielby and Emily Ward arrived at base camp (ca 4,400m, 30.23478°N, 81.63318°E) below the north side of Ardang on November 13. The following day, through a heavy blizzard, they were greeted by the whoops of the two Canadians, who were descending the mountain, having summited Ardang at 2 p.m. the previous day in fine weather. Brown and Twelker had established base camp on October 31 at around 4,200m, made Camp 1 on November 6 at 5,200m, below the big glacial ramp on the north face, and then on the 12th climbed the ramp and camped by the col at its top (5,650m). Next day they followed the mixed north-northwest ridge to the summit snowcap, then continued up this to the top. Slopes had been heavily loaded on the ascent, and a good 60cm of fresh snow covered their tracks by the time they were making the descent.

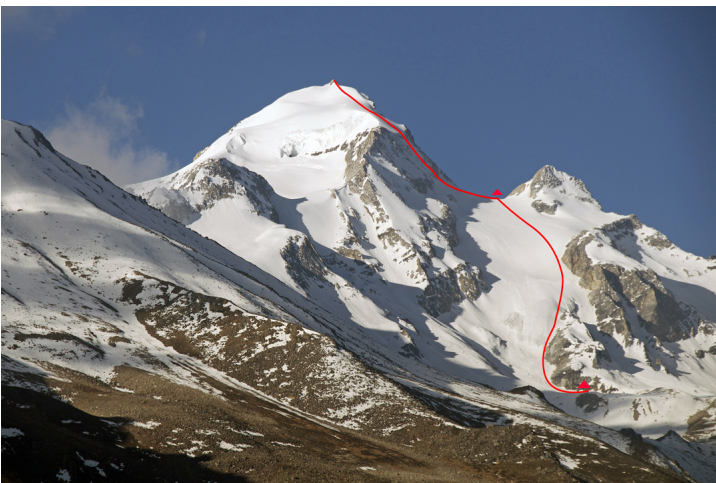
The British pair decided to attempt the less avalanche-threatened but potentially more technical northeast ridge. They aborted at around 5,350m on the 20th when the snow became too dangerous to continue. Realizing it would take a long time for the snow to stabilize, they left the area.

– **Lindsay Griffin**, with information from Emily Ward, Alpine Club, U.K., and Rodolphe Popier, Chronique Alpin, French Alpine Club

Images



Ardang (6,034m) from Nying Khola to the east.



Ardang (6,034m) from the north, showing the Canadian first ascent route (and two camps).



Ardang (6,034m) from the north, showing the Canadian first ascent (with two camps) in red and the British attempt on the northeast ridge in blue.

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