



AAC Publications

Kyajo Ri, Northeast and East Faces, Butterfly Effect

Nepal, Mahalangur Himal, Khumbu Section

After trekking four days to a base camp above the village of Machermo, we spent the next five days acclimatizing, reaching an altitude of 5,600m. Our plan then was to descend to Machermo for a rest, but the weather forecast suggested otherwise. An ongoing window, followed in just a few days by poor conditions, made us decide to start the mountain action immediately.

Early in the morning of October 31, Maciej Kimel, Mariusz Madej, and I started up the northeast face of Kyajo Ri (6,186m), following a line to the right of Stealing Beauty (1,050m, 6b A2 M6; AAJ 2014). We planned to climb alpine style and not use aid.

On the first day, we climbed about halfway up the face. Right from the start, the wall was very steep, and we knew the only relatively comfortable bivouac spot would be at around 5,600m. After 15 pitches with demanding mixed and rock climbing, we arrived at this shelf 12 hours after leaving the ground. It turned out to be quite small and uncomfortable, not allowing more than a few hours of interrupted sleep.

The next day, we started up soft snow and after a while arrived at the central part of the wall, which offered excellent climbing on high-quality vertical granite. The difficulties were significant, but the climbing went smoothly, and after 14 pitches we reached a comfortable ledge at around 5,900m.

We spent the night in our sleeping bags, without a tarp or tent, and the next morning set off for the summit, which was 300m above. We climbed up to the east summit, thinking that traversing from there to the main top would be a formality. We couldn't have been more wrong. The connecting ridge was sharp and jagged, and required more technical climbing. Nevertheless, at 10:30 a.m., and after a total of 34 pitches, we reached the top and a breathtaking panoramic view.

We knew the descent would be serious. We returned to the east summit, then started down the southeast ridge (first climbed in 2006). After five rappels and downclimbing we bivouacked at 5,700m. The next day was the last one with fine weather. We got up at dawn on November 3 and after more rappelling reached our base camp around noon.

A few hours later, we had made it down to Machermo, exhausted, dehydrated, but happy. Sadly, this happiness was ultimately overshadowed by the tragedy of Ondrej Húserka, a friend who had died on the descent from Langtang Lirung (see story above). We dedicated our ascent to him and believe he is watching over us from a better place. We named our route Butterfly Effect (1,150m, 6b M6). The climbing is generally independent of Stealing Beauty but intersects with it at around 5,700m.

—Michał Król, Poland

Editor's Note: This new route starts up a 2011 attempt on the northeast face by New Zealand climbers, but where those climbers moved right onto the hanging glacier, the Polish climbers continued left to terrain on the right side of the east face. A line here had been attempted several times by Dutch parties and German climbers. The highest point reached by these teams was at the base of the headwall, at around 5,800m.

Images

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