



Chekigo Sano, West Face; Bamongo, South Face, Tick Chha

Nepal, Rolwaling Himal

Four members of the Spanish Alpine Team (Equipo Español de Alpinism)—Jesús Ibarz, Omar Juan, Pablo Ruíz, and Jorge Valle, accompanied by Sonia Casas, Jonatan Larrañaga, and expedition leader Mikel Zabalza—visited the Rolwaling in October and November. The previous experiences of fellow Spanish such as Santi Padrós in 2013, Oriol Baró, Manu Córdova, Jordi Corominas, and Jonatan Larrañaga in 2014, and Alberto Urtasun in 2016 convinced Zabalza of the suitability of this area for the culminating trip of the three-year mentoring program.

On arriving in early October at their base camp in Na (4,180m), the team discovered that south faces, normally the optimal aspect for post-monsoon climbing, were very dry. Instead, they first looked at west faces, hoping with the passage of time and drop in temperature, the southern aspects might come into better condition. To acclimatize, members of the group climbed Yalung Ri (5,650m) and Peak 5,794m, first climbed from the south in 1952. Part of the group climbed the easy south ridge, and on October 21, Ibarz, Juan, and Ruíz climbed the latter by a variant to the 2012 Rousseau-Villanueva route (AAJ 2013), following the north ridge in its entirety from the base and naming their line Moon (400m, UIAA V+ 65° M).

On the 28th, after a previous inspection of the line from a simple peak to the south, Larrañaga and Valle climbed the south ridge of Chugimago, only two days after the American first ascent. They felt the 1,000m route was at least TD.

Meanwhile, the rest of the group had set their sights on Chekigo Sano (6,121m, the west summit of Chekigo). On the 28th, Ibarz, Juan, and Ruíz climbed a direct line (probably the first) up the west face, which they named Danebat (900, TD+ WI5 M4/5). They started from a 5,000m camp close to the foot of the face at 2 a.m. and reached the summit at 4 p.m. The lower section gave ice at 70–80° and one mixed section (first crux), while the upper section, in a couloir between two flutes, featured ice to 80°. They rappelled the route, mainly from V-threads, reaching their tent at 10 p.m. It is not clear when the first ascent of Chekigo Sano took place, but it was certainly climbed from the northeast by Paulo Grobel's team in 2004.

On November 3 the same three climbers tried a line up the south face of Kang Nachugo's west ridge, which would exit onto the ridge just right (east) of the summit of Bamongo (6,400m). However, after climbing about two-thirds of the face, they decided it was too late to complete the ascent and descend the same day, so they went down.

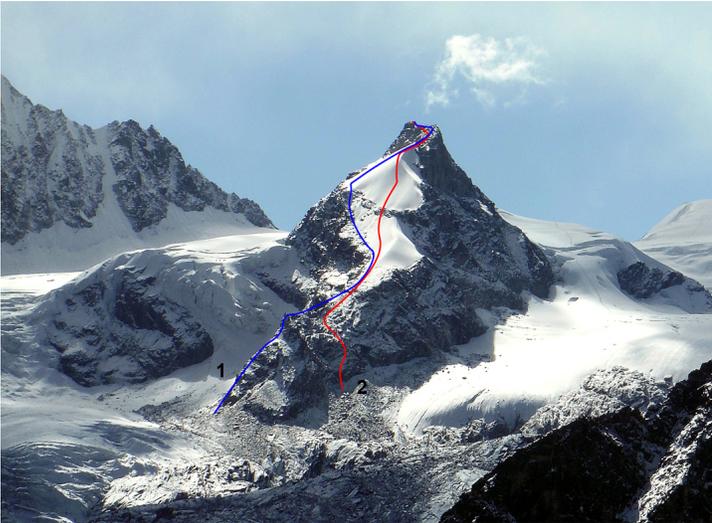
On November 6, Juan and Ruíz returned to their 5,000m camp below the face. The following day the two climbed to Kang Nachugo's west ridge, exiting onto the ridge just right (east) of the summit of Bamongo (6,400m). The 1,200m route was graded ED WI5 M6+ and named Tick Chha, and they considered it harder and more complex than the Colton-MacIntyre on the Grandes Jorasses. They made more than 20 rappels down the route to regain their camp 25 hours after leaving.

That same day, Ibarz and Zabalza repeated an old French route on the southeast face of Chekigo Sano, climbing a couloir/depression between Sano and the main summit (see AAJ 2015 for line). Ibarz and Zabalza bivouacked at 5,150m, then reached the base of the couloir via a rising rocky

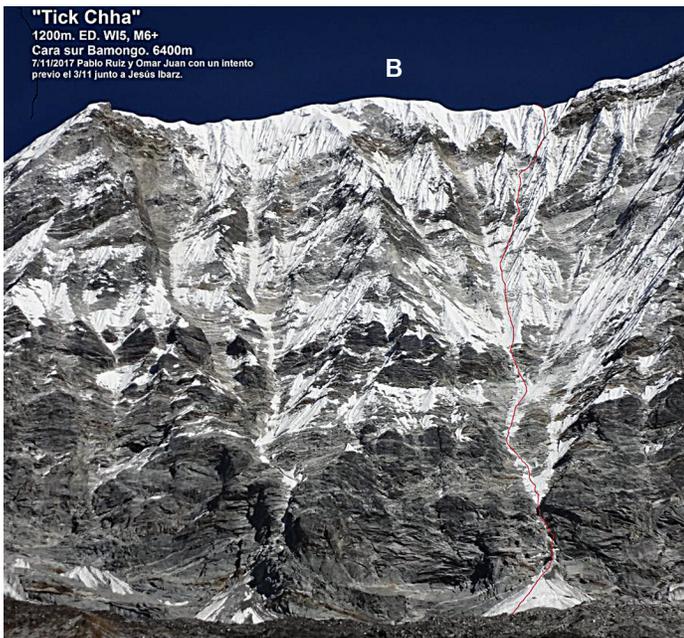
traverse from the right (steps of UIAA IV/V). The couloir itself had sections of M4, a rock step of V, and ice to 80°, steepest below the summit. The overall grade was considered TD (1,000m).

– **Lindsay Griffin**, from information provided by Pablo Ruíz, Spain

Images



Peak 5,794m from the north. (1) Moon (2017). (2) Rousseau-Villanueva (2012). Far left is the right side of the west face of Chugimago. The couloir used to access the south ridge in 2017 is clearly visible.



The south face of (B) Bamongo and Tick Chha.



Climbing ice between the flutes on the upper section of Danebat, west face of Chekigo Sano.



Climbing on the upper section of Danebat, west face of Chekigo Sano.



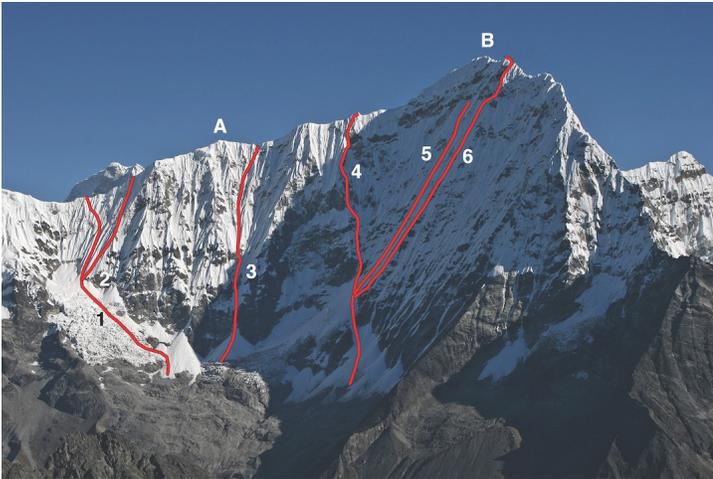
Chekigo Sano and the Spanish line of Danebat (2017), probably the first route up the west face.



Approaching the final mixed section on Tick Chha.



On the final mixed section (M5) below the Bamongo–Kang Nachugo ridge during the ascent of the new route Tick Chha.



Kang Nachugo from the south. (A) Bamongo (6,400m). (B) Main summit (6,737m). (1) West Ridge (2008). (2) Che Guevara (Chinese-Nepalese, 2013, to Bamongo). (3) Tick Chha (Spanish, 2017). (4) Japanese Route (2016, continued to summit). (5) Gottlieb-Puryear 2008 attempt. (6) Monsoon (Kastelic-Padros, 2013) to southeast ridge but not to summit.

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