



Yuri Kruglov, 2017. A perfect summit view towards both west (left) and east (right) ridges !

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Acknowledgements

1/ Introduction

Dhaulagiri I (8167m) is the seventh highest mountain in the world. To Autumn 2017 it had been climbed 544 times (12 disputed and 10 death included ; 6 unrecognized not counted) as follows :

- **368 times in spring**
- 3 times in summer
- 162 times in autumn
- 11 times in winter

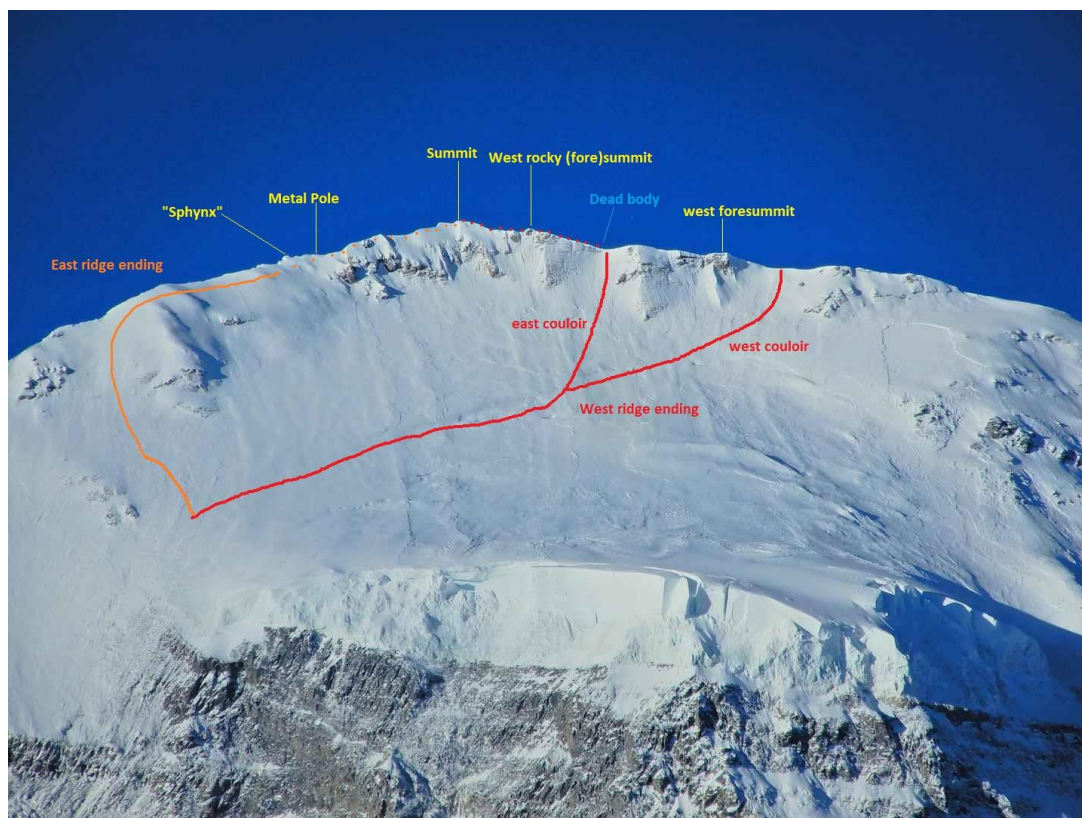
It's been climbed :

- **495 times by the northeast ridge (same as normal route)**
- 13 times by the west face
- 10 times by the north face
- 9 times by the east face
- 8 times by the southwest ridge
- 6 times by the southeast ridge
- 3 times by the southwest pillar
- Never by the south face !

(Source : Himalayan Database)

As an echo to its close neighbour Annapurna I, from which it is separated only by the deepest gorges on the planet (Kali Gandaki), Dhaulagiri I shows a similar, despite in a less manner, long and not steep summit ridge (longitudinally speaking), lying in an east-west orientation. Since this makes difficult to distinguish its real topographical summit at a first glance, in the same time it led mountaineers in history to reach 2 other points of the summit ridge, which the present reports proposes to better clarify (see Boyan Petrov's picture below) :

- Its well know **metal pole**, located at some stage of the final east ridge, and which has mistaken from the 80ies quite a few ropes coming from northeast ridge or east face.
- Its **western rocky summit**, located short before the top west of it, used more and more in the recent years by commercial expeditions as THE summit.



As recent years brought more and more commercial teams on the normal route, these would less and less exit by the northeast ridge, whose very ending is too technical/exposed, instead avoiding it by traversing further west below the west summit ridge, reaching it by 2 different snow couloirs (East and West). For those completing the ascent by the west ridge, summit pictures would frequently show a similar view : climber whether sitting below or more rarely on a characteristic c.1m high by 5m large rock band, sometimes showing prayer flags. More rarely it would show a flat summit pyramid or the proper summit rocks (a,b) lying atop of it.

Interestingly for the west ridge ending, the summit ridge north side is much steeper than the south side, being quite in opposition between with the overall mountain steep unclimbed south face and less steep north face. In fact, all pictures showing the west ridge ending show a 5 to 10m large ground gently coming down on south side. On the other end, east ridge ending consists in a quite sharp and exposed ridge on both sides, despite southern ones remain the more dangerous one.

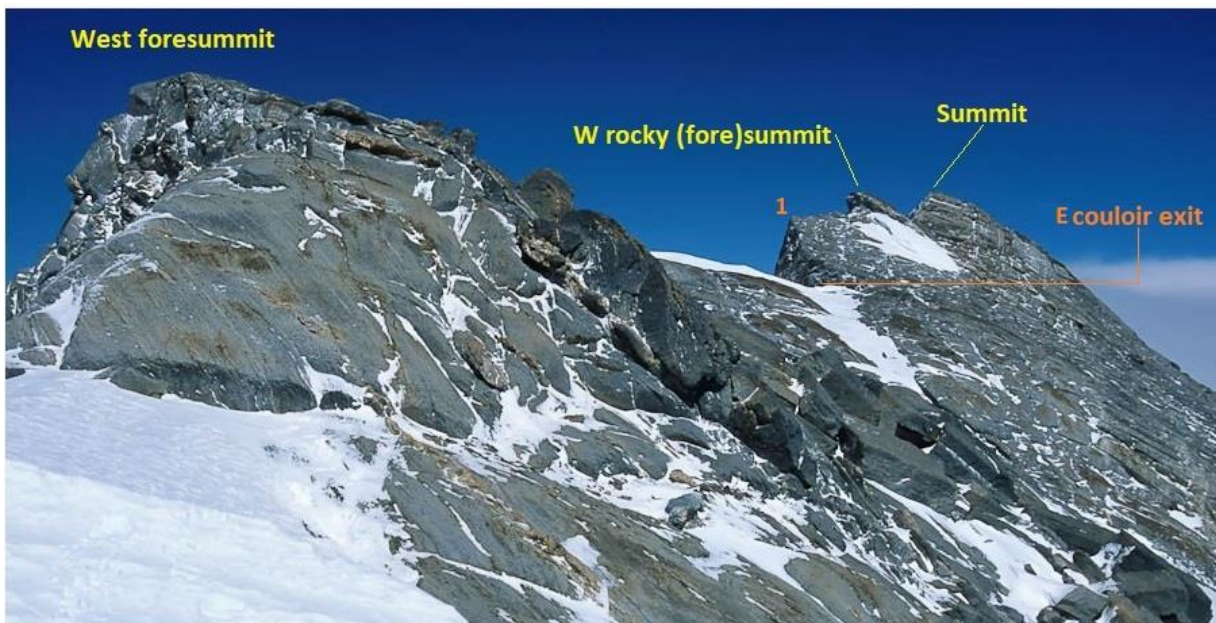
Terms used in the present study :

- WRF : west rocky foresummit
- MP : metal pole (on the east ridge)
- E : east
- W : west

21/ Between west and east couloirs exits to the west ridge



Boyan Petrov, 2017, soon after he had exited from the west couloir. This view allows to make a clear distinction between summit on the right and slightly lower (c.1m according to Petrov, less than 1m for Hámor) WRF. Walking the full length from that position to the summit lasted c.10min according to the late Bulgarian.



Dieter Porsche, 2003, who took the same west couloir exit than Petrov. A slightly closer view than Petrov's, in much drier conditions, with the west foresummit in the left foreground.



Kinga Baranowska, 2008. Progressing from east exit couloir towards WRF.



Peter Hámor, 2017. Nearing WRF.



Ivan Vallejo Ricuarte, 2008. The Ecuadorian sits on top of the WRF after having climbed across it.



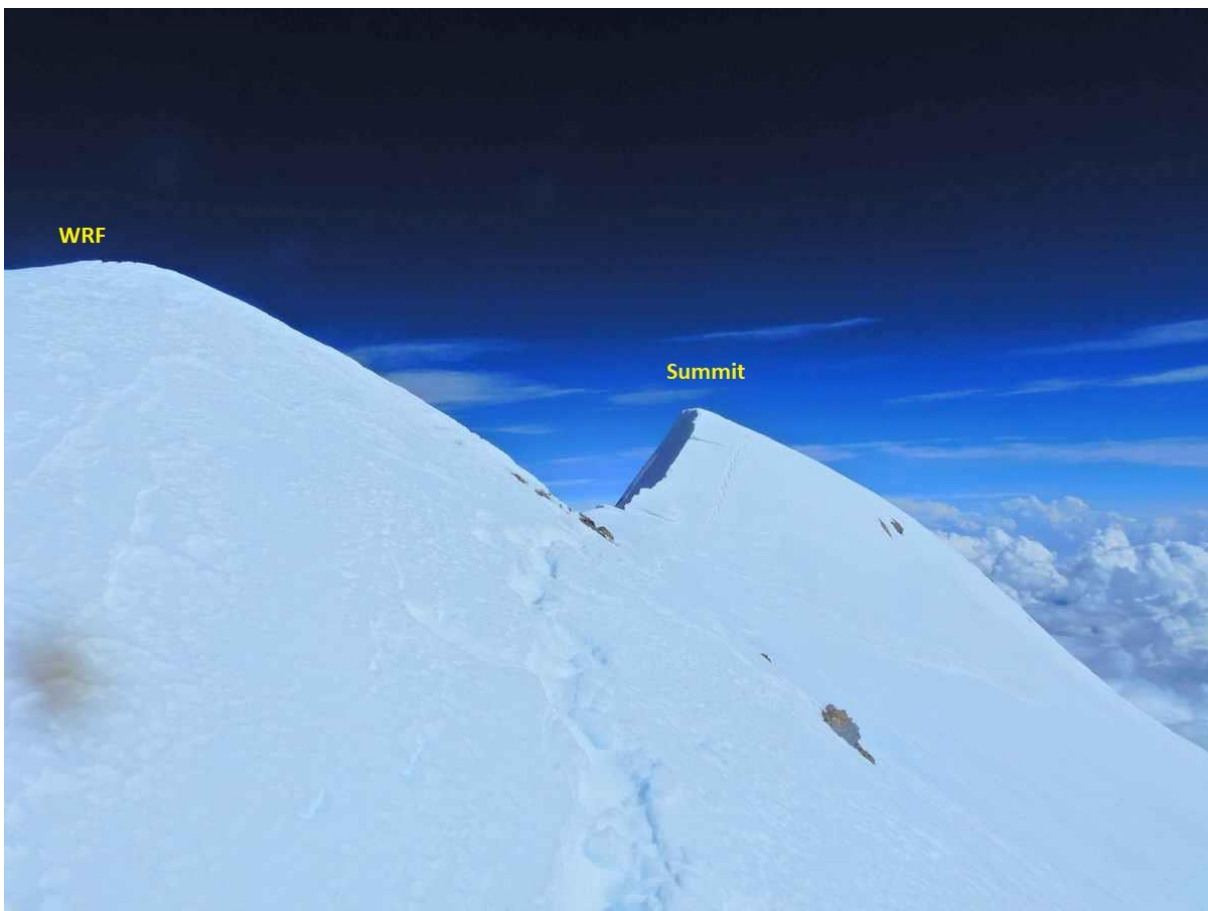
Peter Hámor

15.05.2017, 13:00 pm Dhaulagiri 8167 m.

Peter Hámor, 2017. The Czech sitting afoot of WRF. Here showing for the first time the ground beyond it, with what looks like a small rock band (« subridge to WRF »), real summit of WRF lying in fact atop of that rock band itself. Summit on the right background.



Unknown author. An interesting other view showing the same subridge to WRF and summit in the right background, towards which a climber is going up.



Boyan Petrov, 2017. An interesting view of the same place (slightly below WRF actually), shown in snowy autumn conditions.



Peter Hámor, 2017. A nice view of the main summit pyramid shot from the WRF. The perspective looks like summit is much higher than Hámor's position, in particular looking at the climber's size on right side of the top, but it's probably all due to the picture perspective.



Ferran Latorre, 2008, standing on WRF summit vicinity. Note the 2,3 rocks on the ridge continuing to the top for comparing it with previous Hámor's picture. On Hámor picture, snowy ridge continues further up (on the left low corner of the picture), giving impression than Latorre is closer to 3 than Hámor is, but it might be also due to the pictures perspectives.

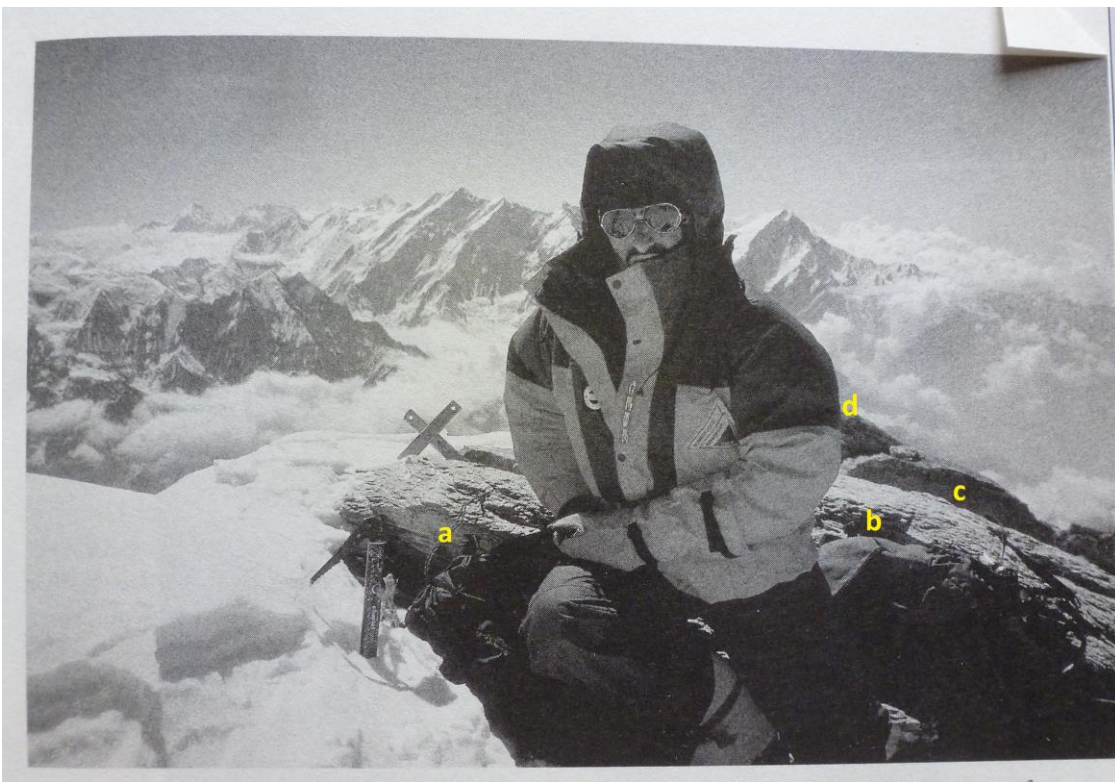
24/ At summit



Samuli Mansikka, 2011. In his perfect summit video, this excerpt shows the arrival to the summit (cairn atop of a), just showing Fang in the background before getting all Annapurna group. Note a,b and c rocks position.



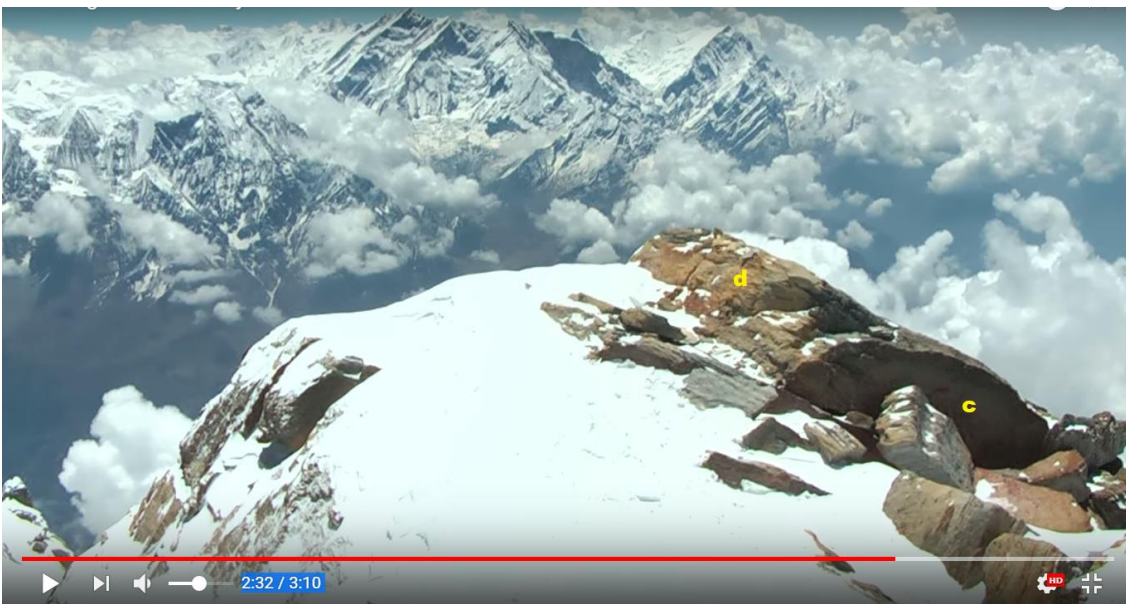
Nives Meroi, 2006. Annapurnas appearing in the east background. The snow place in front of Nives Meroi is the one where many ropes did have their summit pictures in the past.



Norbert Joos, 1995. A nice similar view of Joos close to a, b, this forming the proper summit, and c, d being part of east foresummit.



Alberto Zerain, 2016, lying on a or b, c and d lying further down to the top, at east foresummit in fact. Note also i below Zerain right armpit and its characteristic north pilar.



Samuli Mansikka, 2011. An interesting view showing both c,d, d forming the very top of east foresummit. And on the low left corner, « e » (= north face of east foresummit) and j or « sphynx » in the background.



Yuri Kruglov, 2017. The same east foresummit view under the snow in autumn! Note j, the « Sphynx », and f,g,h,i (the latter with its characteristic north pillar) details of the east ridge.



Ralf Dujmovits, 1990. The German climber used the east ridge ending variant. His picture shows here a full view of a,b (summit), c,d,e (east foresummit), then f and j (« sphynx ») towards east ridge. There's in fact a col between summit and east foresummit which Dujmovits contoured by its north side, when Benet/Meroi did it by its south side.



Samuli Mansikka, 2011. Note the cairn atop of a,b in one of his previous pictures.

25/ Between summit and metal pole area



Nives Meroi, 2006. A poor definition excerpt of her summit video, showing a rare view of metal Pole area and j, from i vicinity. Bumps 1 and 2 visible on left and right of the climber (btw climber coming from right => tends to denote 2 being higher than 1...See part 412/ for details)



Antécime du Dhaulagiri.

André Georges, 1996. A rare view of the Metal Pole area, j/the « sphynx » obviously being hidden by the metal pole area in such perspective. That place saw a few ropes claiming summit in the past.



Nives Meroi, 2005. At first time the Italian couple stopped at this point, thinking it to be the top.



Romano Benet, 2005. Note the various rocks position lying down on north side of the metal Pole foresummit.



Nives Meroi, 2006. An other perspective of the metal pole foresummit, with same rocks to be found than on previous pictures.

31/ Between metal pole area and summit

1960. A clear view afoot of the final technical section of the east ridge. J and i well visible. Also note the west ridge shown on right side to the summit.



Unknown, 1990. View slightly higher than the previous Swiss first ascenders, showing « Sphynx » and i.



Boyan Petrov, 2017. During his first attempt where he reached the east ridge to the metal pole area,

the late Bulgarian shot this view of i east ridge south side, showing the 6,7,8,9 characteristic rocks.



Nives Meroy, 2006. The Italian climber going up to i. Note the 4 to 9 rocks for comparison with other pictures. 4, 5, 9 lead to the same bump lying straight above climber's head, when higher 6 might mark the likely arrival to the second bump below i summit (check part 41/ for details).



Nives Meroy, 2006. After they had passed i bumps, the Italian rope continued towards summit. Note that despite similar at a first glance, the rocks down east to east foresummit aren't to be confounded with 6, 7, 8, 9. Also note that the ridge skyline doesn't go to Summit in a direct straight line, but to E foresummit

instead onto the left (to be checked in opposite perspective with Kruglov picture from top) via h,g,f (not marked, col between g and E foresummit) and e.



Nives Meroi, 2006. f « col » appearing between g cornice and e (north face of E foresummit).



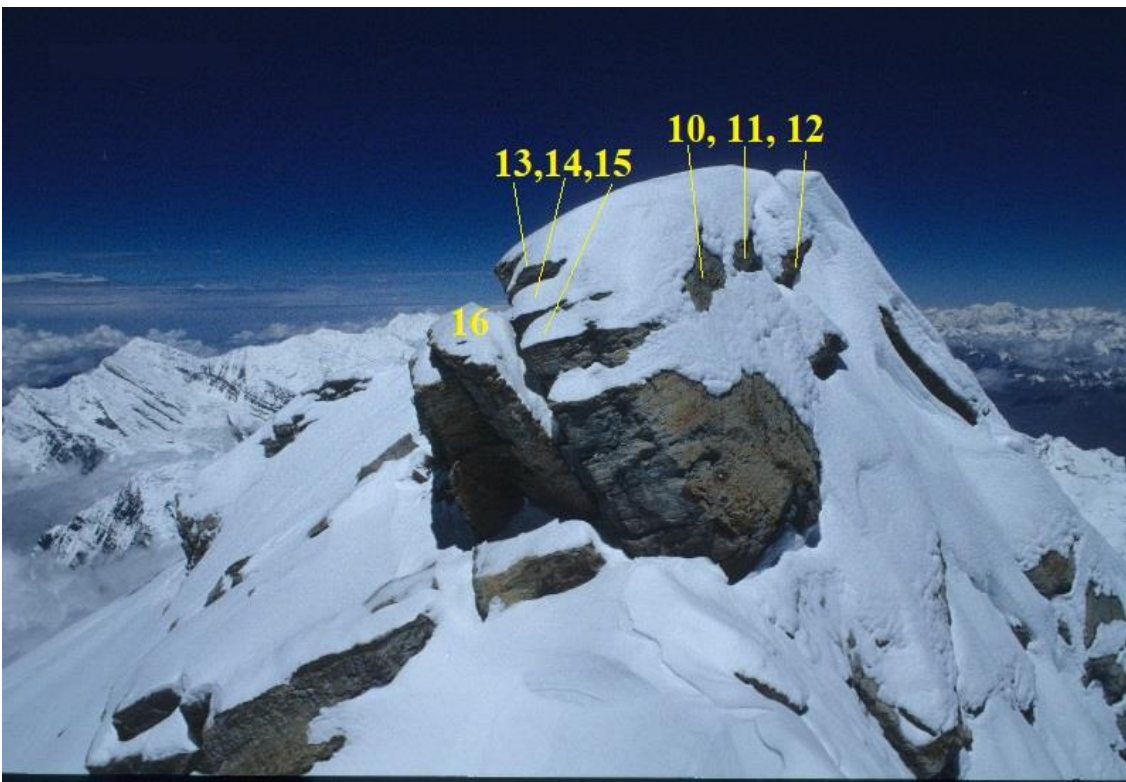
Nives Meroi, 2006, climbing g bump.



Søren Alan Smidt, 1991. Nearing e and the col between both summit and east foresummit.



Nives Meroi, 2006. On top after Benet had avoided the final step by the left/south side.



Unknown. The same rock as seen from the east foresummit vicinity. Final option whether by the left (Merói/Benet, present team) whether by the right (Dujmovits).



Nives Merói, 2006, excerpt from the video. Exiting from south side towards the summit.

32/ At summit



Boyan Petrov, 2017. A summit view towards west in snowy autumn conditions!

33/ Between summit and west rocky foresummit

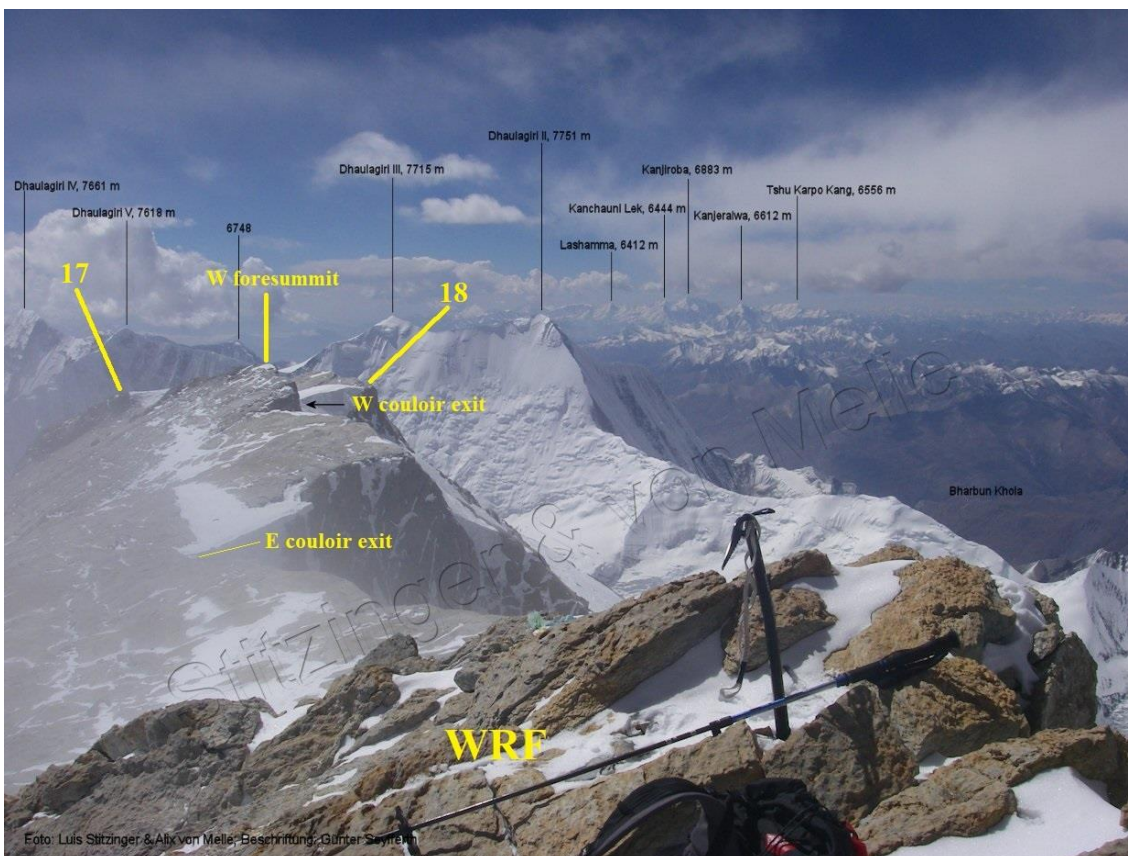


Unknown author. A view short below the top, on the ridge between main summit and WRF.



A close view of WRF from southeast perspective.

34/ At west rocky foresummit



Stitzinger/Von Melle, 2009. A nice view of WRF ground, westwards. Note the west and east couloirs exits. Plus mountains names in the background thanks to Günter Seyfferth !



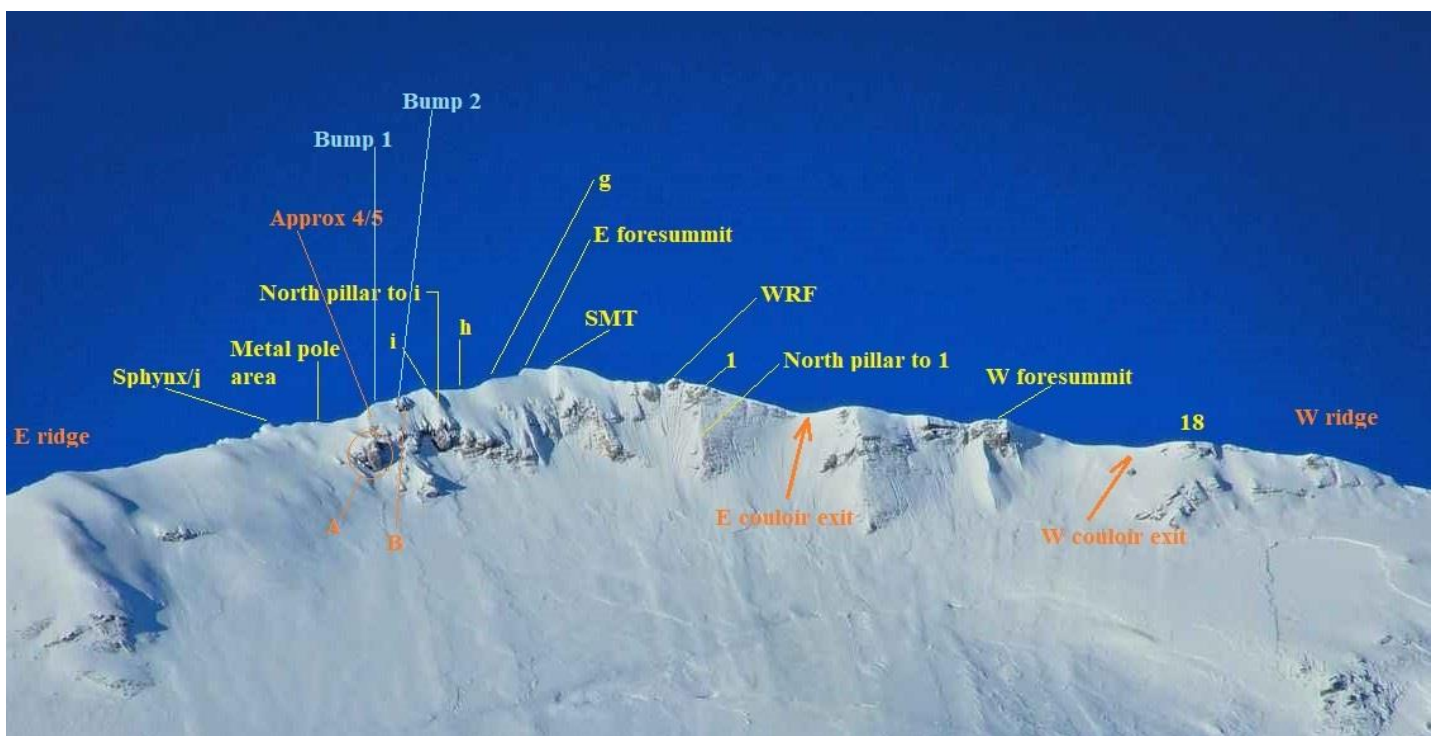
Boyan Petrov, 2017. A nice view westwards, nearing the w couloir exit.

41/ About east ridge ending

Despite no close aerial survey views exist for Dhaulagiri I like for north side of Annapurna I, some general overview and summiters crosschecked views allow for the least to identify some basic key topographical elements of the east ridge zone.

- General organization

Checking views of Dujmovits and Kruglov from summit, one can clearly distinguish the north pillar lying down to i on north side on a general overview picture from the northeast orientation. Also one note that the ridge goes in a direct straight line from i to the lower E foresummit holding c,d,e, this via f,g,h. NOT to the main summit, this denoting a clear « inbetween » position of E foresummit between i and summit on the main east ridge. Climbers are always seen from summit traversing down to E foresummit in a kind of steep rocky face (e), this to reach the col between E foresummit and main summit. In fact, Meroi general overview of main summit ending from h confirms the E foresummit south side to be vertical like, instead showing a direct less difficult (despite exposure) north side to reach the col below summit.



42/ East exit couloir to west ridge views



Foto: Luis Stitzinger & Alix von Melle

Stitzinger/Von Melle, 2009. Below the E couloir exit to the top (climbers already atop of it). On well recognize on its left side the characteristic pillar falling down to 1.



Peter Hámor, 2017. Nearing the top of east couloir exit to the west ridge.

43/ Dead body at the exit of east couloir exit on west ridge

The dead body located at the vicinity of east couloir to west ridge exit belongs to German Albrecht Hammann, who was a member of Norbert Joos 1995 expedition. It shows red/pink colours, lying on the back, with its legs opened towards east. Notes from the Himalayan Database (DHA1-951-02) plenty confirm it :

« Braschler and Hammann left C3 at midnight and on summit at 2 pm together; started down at 3:30 pm together in strong wind. Braschler saw Hammann lying on plateau and 5-6m away his stick on snow; he was unaware pole not with him - discussed medical treatment and resumed descent, Braschler first; Braschler waited for him, called to him, he appeared on ridge looking

down, disappeared & reappeared, shouted he had helicopter and now was not rational and refused to go down perhaps waiting for choppers. Braschler tried to go up to him but in 15 minutes only, 10 mins gained because of exhaustion and went down; no other member able to go up to Hammann in "reasonable time." **He/his body left at 8150m.** Hammann was now totally irrational with serious altitude sickness and would die of it soon or freeze to death soon. »

« German summitter Albrecht Hamman died **near the summit** in his descent. **His body lies on its back and is seen by most Dhaulagiri I summiters via the NE Ridge.** »

« The father of a Spanish climber, Quico Dalmases, came to believe that this body was that of his son who disappeared when he was climbing alone in the autumn of 1989, and the father, Joan Dalmases, appealed in the spring of 2007 to climbers that season to check various details to identify the body as that of Quico. Inaki Ochoa, one of the climbers whom Dalmases asked for help, summited Dhaulagiri I on 26 April 2007, **said that the body was that of the German on Norbert Joos's team in the spring of 1995. The kind of crampons worn by the body did not exist in 1989.** »

« Hammann 19th May cerebral edema and froze to death. »

It happens that most of the past teams whose data could be analyzed so far spread on the summit ridge from metal pole to the west rocky foresummit, their summit place being mostly determined by the final variant they had taken (whether east or west ridge at the end). The present article doesn't intend to undervalue nor dismiss any past claims in any way : until now, a very few information would be available for climbers to know WHERE the strict topographic summit was lying. Only recent facilities provided by Internet could allow to compile enough historical of the available data to understand and reconstruct the topography of such complex summit zone.

Despite we cannot access a similar detailed altitude satellite overview of the summit ridge like on Annapurna I, it happens that most of the climbers who went to both western rocky foresummit and summit agree to say it's almost the same height (about a meter difference for Petrov, roughly 5m for Hámor ...). Even if metal pole of the east ridge seems to lie in a more consequent distance and height to the top than the west rocky foresummit, it has to be reminded that some climbers until a recent past honestly thought it to be the summit.

For future climbers, the most secure way to reach the summit of Dhaulagiri I remains to climb up the normal route using the west ridge ending variant, by whatever exit couloirs to it, then follow the west ridge eastwards. The east ridge variant final section being more technical and exposed.

If past ascents should definitely remain all accepted for the aforementioned reason, from now shouldn't a « tolerance zone » be established for future climbers, knowing the topographic present information available now, so that these can choose their summit in full consciousness ? Wouldn't it be appropriate for such a debate to be opened within mountaineering community, between topographical and mountaineering needs, rigor and tolerance principles ?

51/ Ascents details of the expeditions quoted in this study

On **13 May 1960** summited at noon Kurt Diemberger, Ernst Forrer, Peter Diener, Albin Schelbert, Nawang Dorje Sherpa, Nima Dorje Sherpa, by the northeast ridge normal route, using the proper east ridge ending variant. On 23 May 1960 summited at 18h30 Michel Vaucher and Hugo Weber by the same route/variant.

On **11 May 1990** summited Ralf Dujmovits (11hAM) and Ingrid Baeyens (13h30) by the NE ridge, using the east ridge ending variant to the top.

On **14 May 1990** summited at 12h45 Søren Allan Smidt by the NE ridge normal route, using the east ridge ending variant to the top.

On **19 May 1995** summited Norbert Joos (at 9h30AM), Gerold Ennemoser (at 9hAM), Urs Braschler and Albrecht Hammann (at 14h) by the NE ridge normal route, **using west ridge variant by couloir ?**.

On **5 May 1996** summited at 12h05 André Georges by the NE ridge normal route, using the east ridge ending variant.

On **20 May 2003** summited Jean-Christophe Lafaille (at 10hAM) ; Dieter Porsche, Jochen Haase, Christoph Von Preysing, Pemba Rinzi Sherpa (at 13h) ; Olaf Zill (at 15h), Hans Strang and Kami Sherpa (at 15h10). All by the NE ridge normal route, using west couloir ending variant.

On **17 May 2006** summited at 13h40 Nives Meroi and Romano Benet by the NE ridge normal route, traversing the summit ridge from E ridge to W ridge. The previous year, the duet had stopped his effort to the metal pole.

On **1st May 2008** summited, amongst a large group of 21 climbers, between noon and 16h, Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner, David Göttler, Ferran Latorre, Ivan Vallejo Ricuarte, Nikolai Totmyanin, Valeri Babanov, Radek Jaroš Edurne Pasaban, Zdenek Hruby and Kinga Baranowska. Had all used NE ridge normal route, with west ridge ending variant **by couloir ?**

On **1st May 2009** summited Tunç Findik, amongst a group of 9 climbers summiting between 16h and 18h30. Had used the NE ridge normal route with west ridge ending variant by E couloir.

On **18 May 2009** summited a group of 10 climbers between 13h40 and 16h15, including Luis Stitzinger, Alix Von Melle and Rupert Hauer. Group used the NE ridge normal route with west ridge ending variant by west couloir. **2 CLIMBERS SEEN IN EAST COULOIR ALSO !**

On **16 May 2011** summited at 11hAM Samuli Mansikka by the NE ridge normal route, using the west ridge ending variant **by couloir**.

On **19 May 2016** summited, amongst a group of 11 people spread from 6h30 to 11h30AM, Alberto Zerain and Mariano Galván by the NE ridge normal route, using the west ridge ending by the east couloir.

On **15 May 2017** summited at 13h Peter Hámor and Michal Sabovčik by the NE ridge normal route, using the west ridge ending variant by the east couloir.

On **22 May 2017** summited a large group of 20 people including Lydia Bradey, Dean Staples, Guy Cotter and Claudia López (members arrival on top from 5h15AM to 7hAM). Group used the NE ridge normal route, with west ridge ending variant by the east couloir.

On **29 September 2017** summited at 13h10 Boyan Petrov by the NE ridge normal route, using the west ridge ending variant by west couloir.

On **1st October 2017** summited at 8h30AM Yuri Kruglov, Ang Phurba Sherpa (8h30AM) and Lhakpa Dendi Sherpa (9h30AM) by the NE ridge normal route, using the same ending than Petrov.

Acknowledgements

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