



## **Urkinmang, North-Northeast Face and Northeast Ridge; Kimshung Attempt** Nepal, Langtang

**Alex Gammeter and I spent April in the Langtang Valley. After traversing Tsergo Ri (5,749m) via an ascent of the southwest face and descent of the north ridge, we made an attempt on Kimshung (6,781m, sometimes referred to as Tsangbu Ri).**

Urkinmang from the northwest. (1) North-northeast face, showing the Swiss line from 2016. A French-Swiss pair climbed another line on the north-northeast face, starting in the same couloir, in 1999. (2) North rib (Japanese, 1994). (3) West ridge (Austrian, 1971).

It took three days to get to the foot of the climb. From Kyanjin village, we spent the first day walking up the left side of the icefall below the Kimshung Glacier to a camp at 5,400m at the start of the main glacier. On the second day we found a way through the very heavily crevassed lower section of this glacier, and on the third we moved camp to the head of the glacier. On the fourth day we climbed the east flank of the south ridge of Kimshung to a brèche below the summit pinnacle, but above this the route was extremely dry—no ice, just plenty of loose rock. We rappelled and made it back to Kyanjin the same day. [ Editor's note: While it is believed that Kimshung has been climbed, there is no known record of an ascent.]

On April 15 we left Kyanjin again and set up camp at the little lake between Urkinmang and Ganchempo, north of Tilman's Pass. Next day we hiked below the north face of Urkinmang (generally quoted as 6,151m, but shown as 6,143m on the HMG-Finn map), moving around the base of the prominent north rib to inspect a potential line on the north-northeast face.

On the 17th we left camp at 1 a.m. and began climbing the north-northeast face at about 4,850m. The first 500–600m were moderate snow slopes (up to 50°) in a broad couloir, with two short, steep rock sections. At 5,600m the face steepened to 75°. Fortunately, the rocky sections above were plastered in good ice. We reached the northeast ridge at 5,900m and followed it to the summit.

We descended the west ridge and face. Down to 5,450m, this involved gentle snow slopes, but the next 250m took the form of a band of loose rock. This was much trickier. However, with a lot of zigzagging and one rappel we reached the lower part of the glacier running down to the north from Tilman's Col.

– Philipp Bühner, Switzerland

Editor's note: Japanese climbers made the first known ascent of Urkinmang in 1964 via the south ridge. The west ridge was pioneered in 1971 by Austrians. The most prominent feature on the north face is the north rib, which was climbed in the spring of 1994 by a large Japanese expedition led by Tamotsu Ohnishi. The team fixed 2,000m of rope from 5,000m all the way to the summit. They found difficult climbing over ice and (sometimes loose) rock, with sections of 75° (AAJ 1995).

On May 18, 1999, Francois Damilano (France) and Vincent Sprungli (Switzerland) climbed the north-

northeast face via a 1,450m route that began in the same long snow couloir followed in 2016 by the Swiss, but then headed right through a difficult mixed section, comparable with the north face of Les Droites in the Mont Blanc Range. This gained the upper section of the north rib, which they followed to the summit. They descended the west ridge.

## Images



Climbing through the first rock section on the north-northeast face of Urkinmang.



A foreshortened view looking up the northern aspect of Urkinmang (right). The 2016 north-northeast face route began in a hidden couloir to the left of the long rocky spur slanting down left from the summit to the center of the image. It finished on the upper northeast ridge.



On the lower part of the north-northeast face of Urkinmang. The route headed up through mixed ground in the depression above and left of the climber to gain the upper northeast ridge.



On the north-northeast face of Urkinmang, with the north rib (Japanese, 1994) visible to the left.



On the north-northeast face of Urkinmang, with the north rib (Japanese, 1994) visible to the left.



The final section of the northeast ridge leading to the summit of Urkinmang.



Urkinmang from the northwest. (1) North-northeast face, showing the Swiss line from 2016. A French-Swiss pair climbed another line on the north-northeast face, starting in the same couloir, in 1999. (2) North rib (Japanese, 1994). (3) West ridge (Austrian, 1971).

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