



Himjung, Second Ascent and Traverse via West Ridge and North Ridge

Nepal, Peri Himal

Austrians Vitus Auer, Sebastian Fuchs, and Stefan Larcher, on their first Himalayan expedition, planned to make the second ascent of Himjung (7,092m) via the unclimbed southeast ridge, approaching from the east. The first ascent of this mountain, in 2012, via the southwest face, had been made by the late Kim Chang-ho and fellow Korean Ahn Chi-young (AAJ 2013). However, the Nepalese authorities refused permission to access the valley to the east, so instead the Austrians set up base camp at 4,800m on the western side of the mountain and looked at other options.

After acclimatizing up to 6,000m on Gyaji Kang and exploring the idea of attempting the southeast ridge of Himjung from the western side, they observed that the unclimbed west ridge was an attractive, elegant line and decided to go for this instead. The intention was to traverse the peak and descend the unclimbed north ridge over a total of four or five days, carrying all their gear. However, renowned forecaster Karl Gabl gave them only a day and a half of good weather, and thus the plan was revised. The three set off from base camp on October 31, and at 5 p.m. the same day they reached a high camp at 6,180m, just before the first steep section of the west ridge.

They set off again at 11 that night, lightly equipped. They simul-soloed up steep névé (55°) through the dark and onto a long, quasi-horizontal section of ridge. Often traversing the 55° flanks of the corniced crest, they crossed a minor summit of about 6,600m, and after six hours had reached the lowest col on the ridge, where they decided to take a break. Unfortunately, with no shelter from the rising wind, in 30 minutes they were forced to start again. They pitched out a steep section shortly below the top, and then, at 9 a.m. on November 1, they reached the summit.

After a good rest on top in a surprising calm spell, they began the long traverse of the north ridge toward 7,126-meter Himlung Himal, eventually descending that peak's west spur. This ends in a brittle rock face, and it took some time for the three Austrians to find a route around it. They gained the glacier at sunset, crossed it to the south, then laboriously climbed back up to the waiting tent and sleeping bags at their high camp, arriving exhausted at 8 p.m., about 21 hours after departing. At 4 p.m. the following day, they were back in base camp. The route, never too technical but very long and sustained, had snow and ice to 55° and a friable rock passage of III.

– Lindsay Griffin, from information supplied by Hansjörg Auer and Vitus Auer, Austria

Images



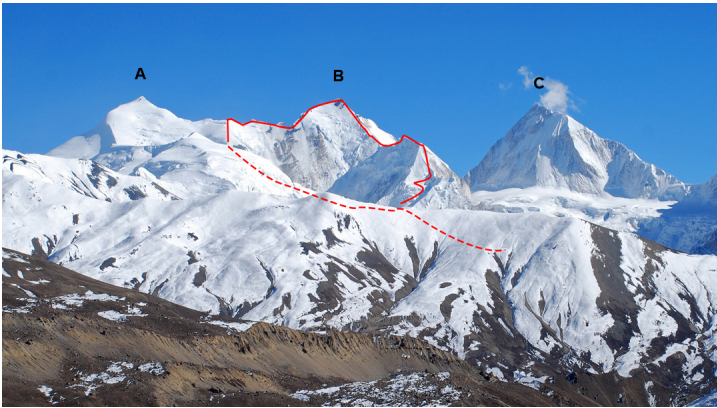
Final steps on the west ridge of Himjung (7,092m). The 2018 Austrian route is visible as the sharp crest below and right of the climbers. Part of Nemjung can be seen to the left, while the peak directly behind the climbers is Gyaji Kang, the Carlsberg Ridge being toward the far end of the shaded face in profile.



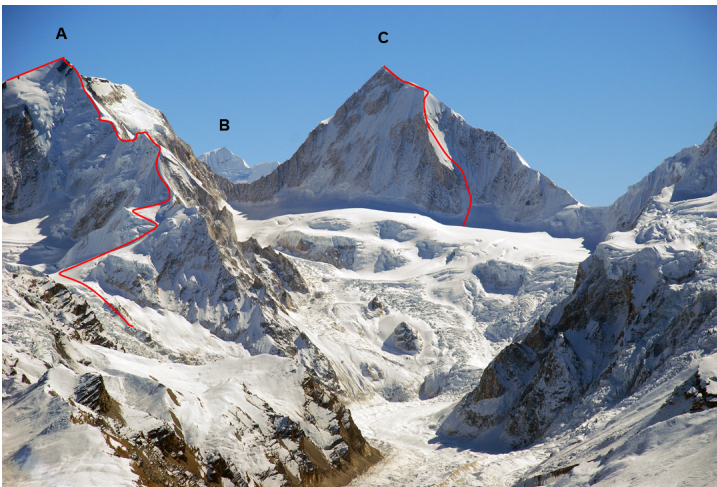
The west ridge of Himjung rises from the bottom right of the image to the 7,092m summit (above the climbers). The upper part of the north ridge is visible coming toward the camera. The flat-topped summit with cloud above is Gyaji Kang.



The traverse of Himjung (7,092m), seen from the west ridge of Himlung. The Austrian team camped on the glacier shoulder on the west ridge at 6,180m, then climbed over Himjung's summit, along the north ridge, down the west spur of neighboring Himlung, and back up to their camp. The round trip was about 21 hours.



Looking east at (A) Himlung Himal, (B) Himjung and the 2018 west ridge--north ridge traverse (the approach and most of the descent of Himlung's west spur are hidden by the foreground ridge), and (C) Nemjung.



Looking more or less east at (A) Himjung and the west ridge climbed by Austrians in 2018, (B) Panbari, and (C) Nemjung and the 2009 Japanese route up the west face. The glacier separating A and C is the Pangri, and it was from there that the Koreans climbed the southwest face of Himjung to make the first ascent.

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