



AAC Publications

Sherpi Kangri II, Southeast Ridge

Pakistan, Karakoram, Saltoro Group

Sherpi Kangri II (ca 7,000m according to Eberhard Jurgalski and the Miyamori and Seyfferth maps; higher and lower heights also appear in print) lies at 35°28'45"N, 76°48'21"E on the Line of Control between the India- and Pakistan-controlled sectors of the East Karakoram. Prior to 2019, it had been attempted only once.

In 1974, a Japanese expedition trying the east ridge of Sherpi Kangri I (7,380m) gave up and instead reported fixing around 1,000m of rope up the southeast ridge of Sherpi Kangri II, before retreating at 6,300m due to technical difficulty. On August 7, Matt Cornell, Jackson Marvell, and I (all USA) summited this peak via the southeast ridge in seven days round trip from base camp.

Porter shortages resulted in a significantly lower base camp than we had planned—at around 3,700m on the west bank of the Sherpi Gang Glacier, more or less level with the first icefall. This required establishing three additional camps several kilometers apart, ferrying loads through complicated terrain, to reach the glacier plateau below the peak. After investing much time and energy on this approach, including portering some of our own loads to base camp, we did not have time to acclimatize as slowly as we would have liked for higher elevations. We therefore chose the seemingly nontechnical southeast ridge, so that we could bail quickly if one of us began to show signs of acute altitude sickness.

We climbed to the summit from our highest glacier camp over two days, with one bivouac on the ridge. The terrain was largely classic AI3/4, and the height of the route around 1,100m. On the ridge we found some old Goldline rope and a couple of Japanese pins.

I'm proud of this ascent because I think we did a good job of restrategizing and working hard to summit our main objective, despite the logistical hang-ups encountered. We feel extremely grateful to tag a previously unclimbed 7,000m peak this late in the timeline of alpine climbing.

– Kurt Ross, USA

Historical Notes on Sherpi Kangri I: One year after the Japanese expedition mentioned above, which reached 6,400m on the northeast ridge of Sherpi Kangri I, that peak was tried in 1975 by an experienced British team led by Dave Alcock. They attempted the peak from the south and gave up below 6,000m on realizing that the difficulties and distance were too great in their available time, and instead made first ascents of Pyramid Peak (6,500m), on the watershed ridge to the southeast, and Chorta Kangri (6,620m) on the ridge south of that, running toward Saltoro Kangri.

Sherpi Kangri I was climbed the following year (1976) by Kazumasa Hirai's Japanese expedition, via the west ridge. Until 2019, this area had not been visited since. Although there are many unclimbed summits in this region, since the beginnings of the Indo-Pakistan conflict in the early 1980s, the military has mostly refused to allow civilian and/or foreign teams to enter

Images



Kurt Ross and Matt Cornell on the southeast ridge of Sherpi Kangri II with Peak 36 Glacier behind. (Saltoro Kangri was formerly referred to as Peak 36.) The highest snowy pyramid on the far side of this glacier is unnamed Peak 6,587m.



Matt Cornell about to tackle a rock step on the southeast ridge of Sherpi Kangri II.



Jackson Marvell peers over the south face of Sherpi Kangri II. The snow ridge to the left leads out of picture toward Sherpi Kangri I.



Looking north up the chaotic Sherpi Gang Glacier toward Sherpi Kangri I (7,380m). The American team's approach took them above the left side of this glacier. The first ascent of Sherpi Kangri I was made via the left-hand (west) ridge in 1976.



The first ascent of Sherpi Kangri II generally followed the right skyline (southeast ridge).

Article Details

Author	Kurt Ross
Publication	AAJ
Volume	62
Issue	94
Page	
Copyright Date	2020
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions