



## **Kyungka Ri II, First Ascent via Southwest Face and Southeast Ridge**

Nepal, Langtang Himal

The southwest slope and southeast ridge of Kyungka Ri II from the upper Shalbachum Glacier. Photo by Sophie Lavaud

**On December 8, Dawa Sangay Sherpa, Mingma Sherpa, Tenjing Sherpa, four local porters, Kukur (a lovely crazy dog that followed us from Langtang village), and I set off from Kyanjin Gompa (3,870m) for the Shalbachum Glacier.** After a long day on wild moraine, we made base camp at 4,570m, and on the 9th, another full day of dangerous, unstable moraine, we set Camp 1 at 5,325m, just before the glacier ice. Two porters remained here, while the next day the rest of us continued up to Camp 2 on the glacier at 5,630m.

Leaving the dog in the company of the remaining two porters, Dawa, Mingma, Tenjing, and I set off at 2 a.m. on the 11th and climbed up the southwest-facing slope above to reach the ridge between Kyungka Ri I and II. In the autumn of 2017, the summit of Kyungka Ri I (6,599m) was reached by climbing this slope, then turning right along the northwest ridge to the top (AAJ 2018). We climbed more to the left on the southwest slope, with a few steep sections and huge crevasses making this rather technical and difficult. At the ridgeline, we headed left up the southeast ridge to reach the summit of Kyungka Ri II (official height 6,506m; 28°18'12.24"N, 85°39'44.71"E) at 10:40 a.m.; my GPS measured an altitude of 6,522m. According to Yan Giezendanner, the well-known French weather forecaster, the wind on top was 60–65 km/h. We came down safely, leaving three V-threads, four snow stakes, and one ice screw. Continuing down the glacier, we reached Camp 1 at 4:30 p.m.

That night we had 15–20cm of snow. Next day, with the dangerous moraine still to descend and our four porters not equipped for snow, we decided to call a helicopter, and in three separate lifts were transported to Kyanjin Gompa.

— Sophie Lavaud, Switzerland

## Images



Tenjing Sherpa on his way down from the lower southwest face on December 10, the day before the successful ascent of Kyungka Ri II. He and Dawa Sangay Sherpa had fixed the first steep wall before returning to Camp 2.



Camp 1 (5,325m) on the Shalbachum Glacier moraine with (A) Kyungka Ri II, (B) Kyungka Ri I, and (C) an unnamed summit of around 6,300m.



Two Sherpas, one porter, and a dog on the way to Camp 2 below the southwest slope of Kyungka Ri II. The summit is directly above the lowest figure.



Dawa Sangay nearing the top of the southwest slope of Kyungka Ri II at sunrise. Shalbachum (6,707m) rises above the Shalbachum Glacier, the approach route to Kyungka Ri from Langtang. The northeast ridge of Shalbachum, falling toward the camera, marks the Nepal-Tibet frontier.



Tenjing Sherpa and Mingma Sherpa on the summit of Kyungka Ri II with the southwest face of Xixabangma to the left.



Descending the southwest slope of Kyungka Ri II after the first ascent.



Tenjing Sherpa rappels the last steep section on the southwest slope of Kyungka Ri II to the upper Shalbachum Glacier.



The southwest slope and southeast ridge of Kyungka Ri II from the upper Shalbachum Glacier.



Kukur at Camp 2 (5,630m) on the upper Shalbachum Glacier.

## Article Details

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