



Purbung, First Ascent; Purkung; Southeast Ridge

Nepal, Damodar Himal

In late November, Jost Kobusch and Nicolas Scheidtweiler (Germany) made the first ascent of Purbung Himal (a.k.a. Putrung, 6,500m HMG-Finn Map, 28°48'4.48"N, 84°1'4.41"E) via a long approach from Thorung Phedi (4,450m), the last stop before the westward crossing of the Thorung La on the Annapurna Circuit trek.

Purbung was brought onto the official list of permitted peaks in 2002 and was attempted the following year by a team from Finland. They spent much time on route-finding before reaching the west-northwest ridge. Short on time, they made a summit push from their high camp at 5,600m but turned back at 6,050m. The peak was also attempted from the northwest in the autumn of 2018 by Italians, but they gave up at 5,650m.

Heading northeast from the lodges at Thorung Phedi, Kobusch and Scheidtweiler moved through a gorge and camped at around 5,100m. A couple of days later, on November 23, following easy snow and a long traverse in front of a large icefall, they made their second camp at 5,400m. More reconnaissance and acclimatization followed until finally a third camp was placed at 5,850m, to the northeast of Camp 2; reaching here had involved climbing through an icefall (WI2).

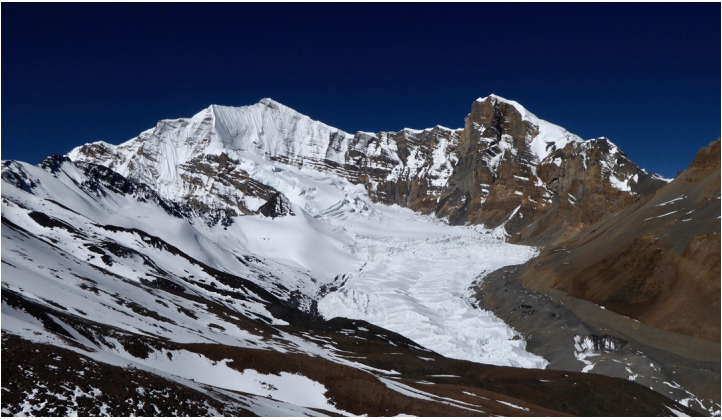
On the 30th, the two left this camp and crossed a col northeast to reach a remote glacier basin northwest of Purbung. Ascending this basin, they climbed the west face of Purbung to a col on its northwest ridge. From here they traversed the summit and descended the southwest ridge to a point before the subsidiary top of Peak 6,335m, from which they climbed down the west face. They reversed their approach on the glacier and regained Camp 3. The grade was PD+ with slopes to 50°. Various devices showed summit altitudes from 6,430m to 6,515m; the pair feel the height is in the region of 6,485m.

Directly north of Camp 3 stood Purkung (6,128m, 28°48'54.05"N, 83°59'25.20"E), first climbed by Japanese in 2004 via the west ridge. In 2007 another Japanese team attempted to climb it from the south but gave up when it became too steep. Paulo Grobel's 2017 expedition reached the summit from the north for the second ascent.

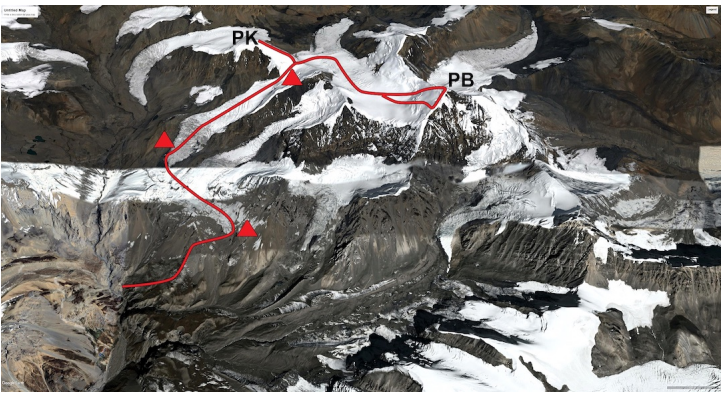
On the morning of December 1, while Scheidtweiler was resting at Camp 3, Kobusch climbed Purkung via the southeast ridge, a new route. He took an hour and 20 minutes to reach the summit from camp and descended in just 20 minutes.

— **Information from Jost Kobusch, Germany, and Rodolphe Popier, Himalayan Database, France**

Images



Purbung, seen from the north-northeast near to the Teri La. The route of ascent lay in a glacier basin beyond the right skyline (northwest) ridge but finished up the last section of this ridge to the summit.



The approximate line of approach to Purbung in November 2021, with camps, from Thorung Phedi to (PB) Purbung and (PK) Purkung.

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